THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE LAITY TO THE GROWTH OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE ONITSHA PROVINCE OF EASTERN NIGERIA 1905-1983

BY

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A B S T R A C T

Recent studies in African church historiography have increasingly shown that the generally acknowledged successful planting of Christian Churches in parts of Africa, especially the East and West, from the nineteenth century was not entirely the work of foreign missionaries alone. Africans themselves participated actively in planting, sustaining and propagating the faith. These Africans can clearly be grouped into two: first, those who were ordained ministers of the church, and secondly, the lay members. Previous historians did not seriously respect this division in their accounts of African participation, thus leading to a rather confused presentation. But this division and distinction is important, at least in the case of some Christian Churches, like the Roman Catholic Church, where the roles of the clergy and the laity are clearly canonically distinct. Many of the ordained African ministers did not behave very differently from their white counterparts who were in many cases regarded as model! Those who tried to follow a different line were sometimes described as rebels and cast away.

Here one may recall the origin of many independent African churches or the schism which led to the Niger Delta Pastorate in the Anglican Church in Nigeria. In the Roman Catholic Church there was Reverend Father Michael Tansi – an Igbo priest, who was said to have opposed any form of inculturation in the church for fear of being unorthodox.

This study seeks, therefore, to isolate the African laity from their clerical counterparts, and to examine the former's distinct contribution, either as individuals or in groups, toward the growth of Christianity in Africa. The particular church chosen is the Roman Catholic Church. The area studied is the Onitsha Province of the former Eastern Provinces of Nigeria – an area where the Catholic Church is widely believed to have made her greatest progress in Nigeria.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADCU - Awka District Catholic Union.

ASON - Archdiocesan Secretariat Onitsha.

AYF - Anglican Youth Fellowship.

CCD - Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

CCN - Christian Council of Nigeria.

CMA - Christian Mothers' Association

CMS - Church Missionary Society.

CPC - Convention of Protestant Citizens.

CSE - Congregation of the Holy Spirit.

CSN - Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria.

CTA - Catholic Teachers' Association.

CWO - Catholic Women's Organisation.

CYL - Catholic Youth League.

ENCC - Eastern Nigeria Catholic Council.

NAE - Nigerian National Archives Enugu.

NAI - Nigerian National Archives Ibadan

NCE - National Certificate in Education.

NUT - Nigerian Union of Teachers.

KSM - Knight of Saint Mulumba.

RCM - Roman Catholic Mission.

UPE - Universal Primary Education.

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INTRODUCTION

Today, mission church history in Nigeria, as in the rest of Africa, has taken a variety of forms and each new approach exposes the need for further and deeper study of either the old or an entirely new area. The process of this unfolding of church history in Nigeria can rightly be said to have begun with Professor J.F.A. Ajayi's classic work titled Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841-1891, which appeared in 1965. It unfolded and examined the effect of white racism on the first generations of Christian elites in the nineteenth century in what later became Southern Nigeria. Ajayi's work was closely followed by Emmanuel Ayandele's equally classic account of the socio-political effects of Christian missionary activities in Nigeria.[1] Both pioneering works have this in common – They emphasized the effects of the work of Christian missionaries on Africans in the immediate pre-colonial era. African reaction was not just to the Christian missions alone, but to Christian missions seen as "birds of the same feather" as the colonial administrator and the company merchant.[2] With this perspective in mind, it is understandable that an account of such response by the Africans will be necessarily narrow – saying little or nothing of how the African himself lived the new religion and helped to propagate it among his kith and kin. Ekechi gave another dimension to African church historiography by seeing the different Christian

missions as scrambling with one another for the soul of the African.[3] The attitude of the colonial government to missionary education in Northern Nigeria preoccupied Graham in his book.[4] Most of these works did not focus on any particular Christian church. One of the earliest attempts to do so was Father John Jordan's book, Bishop Shanahan of Southern Nigeria.[5] It was a study of the missionary activities of the Holy Ghost Fathers at the time of Bishop Joseph Shanahan. It does not claim to be a biography nor a history of Bishop Shanahan, but, as the author said, "a re-living of the active apostolate" of Bishop Shanahan.[6] Therefore there was little in it of African response to Christianity, except as seen by the white missionary himself. Rather it was a catalogue of the achievements of Bishop Shanahan.[7] A new variety was added to African church historiography with the study of independent African churches. Webster, for instance, studied the African churches in Yoruba-land, showing how they expanded and governed themselves.[8] Peel studied the Aladura churches and examined their doctrine and church organisation.[9] Turner concentrated on a particular Independent African Church – The Church of the Lord (Aladura).[10]

African church historiography took a decidedly new turn when historians began to lay less emphasis either on the work of Christian missionaries (mainly white) in Africa, or on the changes Christianity brought on Africa and the Africans but more on how Africans lived and experienced the Christian religion in their

cultural milieu and helped to sustain, defend and propagate it both during the colonial and post colonial period. Although work on this has begun, there continues to be more pressure for further studies.[11] Some of the works cited earlier did contain paragraphs or sections on how Africans helped to spread the faith which they received. Ekechi's work, for instance, dwelt on the role of Africans in the Niger Mission.[12] Colman Cooke, in his study of the Catholic Mission in Calabar, dwelt on the evolution of the church committee. Of this body of Christians he wrote,

> Decades in advance of its European experience, the Church in Africa developed the role of the laity to meet specific needs. This was expressed in the emergence of the Church Committee as an advisory body to the clergy and in the liturgical ministry and teaching role of the catechist.[13]

Every one, including the white missionary himself, acknowledges that the work of evangelizing Africa and the African would have been impossible without the help of Africans themselves but unfortunately, until recently, not enough attention was paid to them. Happily, as Ogbu Kalu pointed out, "the new historiography in Africa is beginning to emphasize the unsung contributions of various categories of indigenous people in the Christianisation of West Africa".[14] It has shown the different individuals and groups of people involved and the variety of ways they lived the Christian life, tried to sustain it and to propagate it among their kith and kin, and outside their home.

Such agents, to use Kalu's sevenfold typology, include the following:

(i) noble patrons, that is, men of local prominence, like chiefs, who on their own initiative invited and patronized missionaries;
(ii) interpreters and wards who influenced expansion;
(iii) lay converts, including traders, acting in groups or individually to use their social powers in aid of missions;
(iv) catechists, evangelists, church elders and school teachers who bore the brunt of opening and running new parishes and stations;
(v) congregations which pioneered expansion during evangelical crusades to neighbouring areas and who paid for the upkeep of ministers;
(vi) local communities who built and maintained church and school infrastructures;
(vii) charismatic prophetic figures who quickened the pace of Christianisation in their brief career.[15]

The list could be endless as more studies are made of African participation in the evangelisation of Africans. For instance, one could add prayer associations which originated from the people and became powerful instruments of evangelisation. A case is the Block Rosary Crusade — a unique prayer movement of children and young people among the Igbo people.[16] There were also pressure groups with quasi-political overtones but which originally were built along parochial boundaries.[17]

As was said earlier, there were scattered references to some of the above elements in previous studies by historians but it is only recently that a serious study of them is beginning to be made.

These studies justify Hastings' observation about African Christians – that "there never had been a time in which African Christians were not givers as well as receivers in the process of Christian growth."[18] Hastings, quoting Oliver, described aptly the village catechist and teacher as "the corner-stone of the African Church."[19]

In the area of lived Christian experience of individuals Professor Elizabeth Isichei's collection is useful and inspiring.[20] In her own words, the study shows that "although they often spoke and wrote in phrases which now became unfashionable, the Nigerian Christians of the first generation accepted Christianity with a literalness which changed their lives."[21] That such individuals were many cannot be gainsaid. It remains for posterity to pay due tribute to them when their lives and work have been unearthed and recorded by historians.

One of the recent comprehensive works in Nigeria on native participation in evangelisation is Erivwo's "Christianity in Urhoboland."[22] On Igboland, Chuta's recent study of Southern Igboland may be cited.[23] Chuta examined the role of various native agents who played a major part in spreading and sustaining the different Christian churches in the Igbo area of Southern Nigeria. His aim was partly to "bridge the gap created by the absence or lack of detailed critical survey of the entire missionary factor in Southern Igboland," thereby, as it were, extending the work of Tasie[24] which dealt with the Niger Delta area.

Chuta's study is a useful contribution to our present knowledge of this aspect of African church history. His preoccupation with so many Christian churches however robs his work of the depth which it would otherwise have had. Again, the emphasis was on the advent of one Christian denomination or the other and the principal agents responsible for it. Chuta's use of "African agent" is rather wide, embracing, as he said, "all African or Black missionaries whose missionary field is Africa."[25] When referring to "sons of the soil" he prefers the word "local agent," that is, any agent of African traditional community."[26] Finally, he uses the word "indigenous" to mean culture area. Much as these distinctions are useful, the great merit of his work is in the ample use of oral sources which goes to further validate their usefulness and necessity for any meaningful writing of African church history ~~here~~ – considering the dearth of written sources, due to the fact, as he rightly observed, that the majority of the main actors kept little or no written accounts, being not so literate themselves. Again, a few extant records in Mission archives locally or in the possession of individuals were destroyed as a result of the last civil war in the country.

The present study, therefore, aims at a more holistic approach to the study of African participation in the evangelisation of Africans. It concentrates on lay people themselves, excluding the clergy, who often, especially in the beginning, did not behave very differently from their expatriate counterparts.

It did not limit itself, as some previous studies have done, to the mere spreading of the Christian faith by one person to another, and from one area to another. While admitting the importance of this, the writer prefers to leave it in the background and instead to emphasize those structures and groups, often devised by the people themselves, without which Christianity would not have spread, sustained itself or survived attacks at it by her opponents, both during the nationalist era and in the post-independence era. Among the groups examined were teachers, women and chiefs. They played important roles . . . not only as individuals, but perhaps more importantly, as groups. Teachers for example, were a people whose work, interest, fortunes and allegiance underwent changes as other factors affected the Christian churches and educational system. Women's strength became visible and effective when they organised themselves as a body. Although there was no concerted action by chiefs, the action of a chief was sometimes not in complete isolation from that of another. Their changing role in the church when their political power-base collapsed is critically examined in chapter six.

The above approach largely accounts for the style and choice of theme covered in this study. It also helped to determine the period to which the study is limited – 1905 to 1983. The year 1905 is chosen principally because it was the beginning of great radical changes in Catholic missionary strategies and activities.

For instance, it marked the beginning of the penetration of Igbo heartland by the Holy Ghost Fathers.[27] It was also the year Father (later Bishop) Joseph Shanahan who has been acclaimed the great Apostle of Igboland, took over the mantle of leadership of Catholic missionary enterprise in Southern Nigeria. His era witnessed a great expansion of Catholic mission schools and territory. The choice of an upward limit – 1983 – was much more difficult and perhaps, arbitrary, but factors which weighed on the writer include the following: first, 1983 marked the end of the Second Republic in Nigeria, which began in October 1979, following the return of Nigeria to civil rule. In church circle this period was important because it afforded the Catholic laity the opportunity to express itself freely for the first time after the long period of military rule during which it could not do so. Besides, with the repatriation of almost all the foreign missionaries, leadership of the church was clearly in the hands of the indigenous clergy.[28] Finally, there was greater demand by the laity for inculturation of the church during this period.[29]

The Onitsha Province of the former Eastern Provinces of Nigeria was chosen as the area of study because of a number of reasons. First, Onitsha town, by which the Province was named, is the cradle of Catholic Christianity in the Eastern Region of Nigeria. It was there that Father Joseph Lutz and the other pioneer Catholic missionaries first landed in 1885 and began the work of evangelisation.[30]

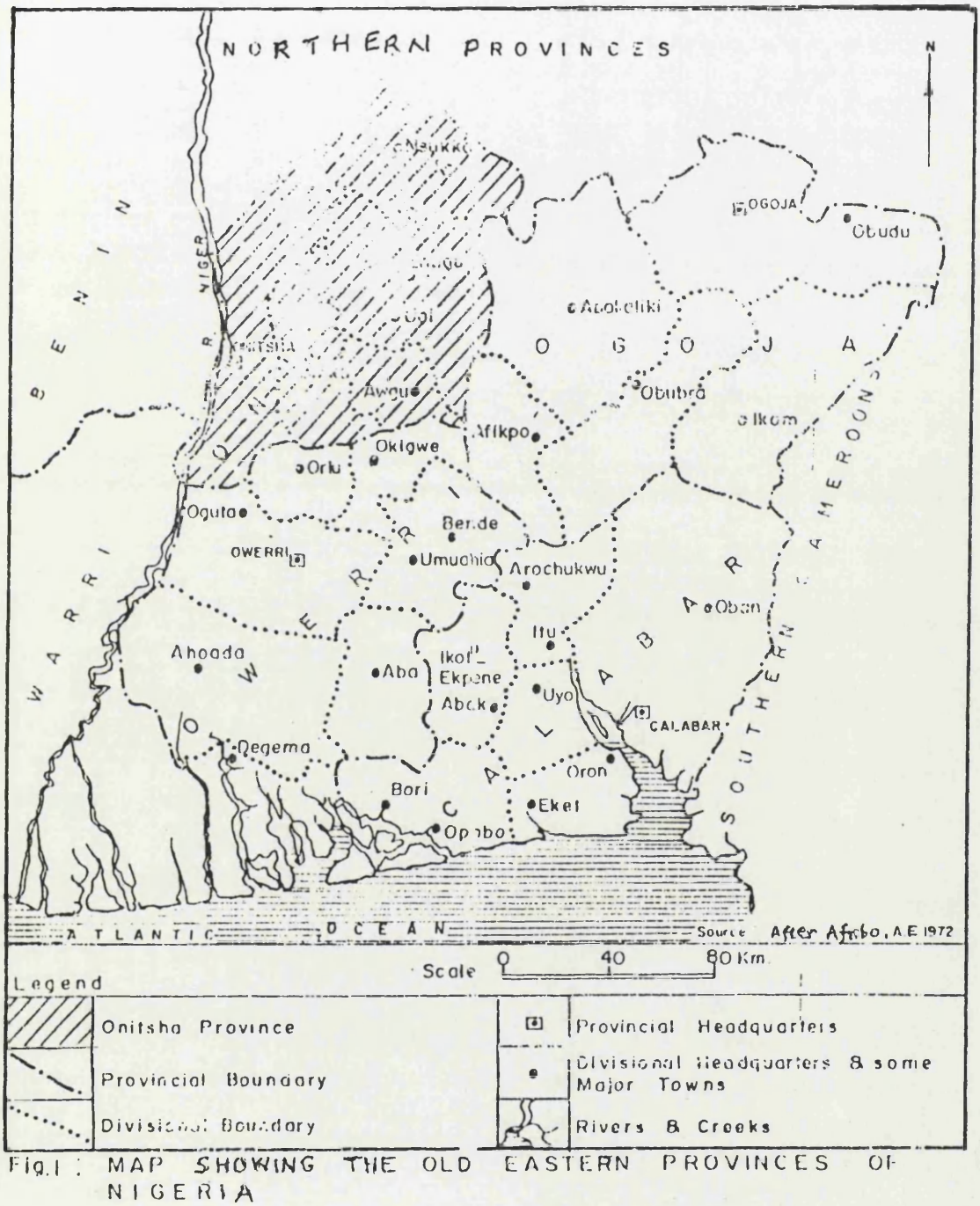

Fig.1 : MAP SHOWING THE OLD EASTERN PROVINCES OF NIGERIA

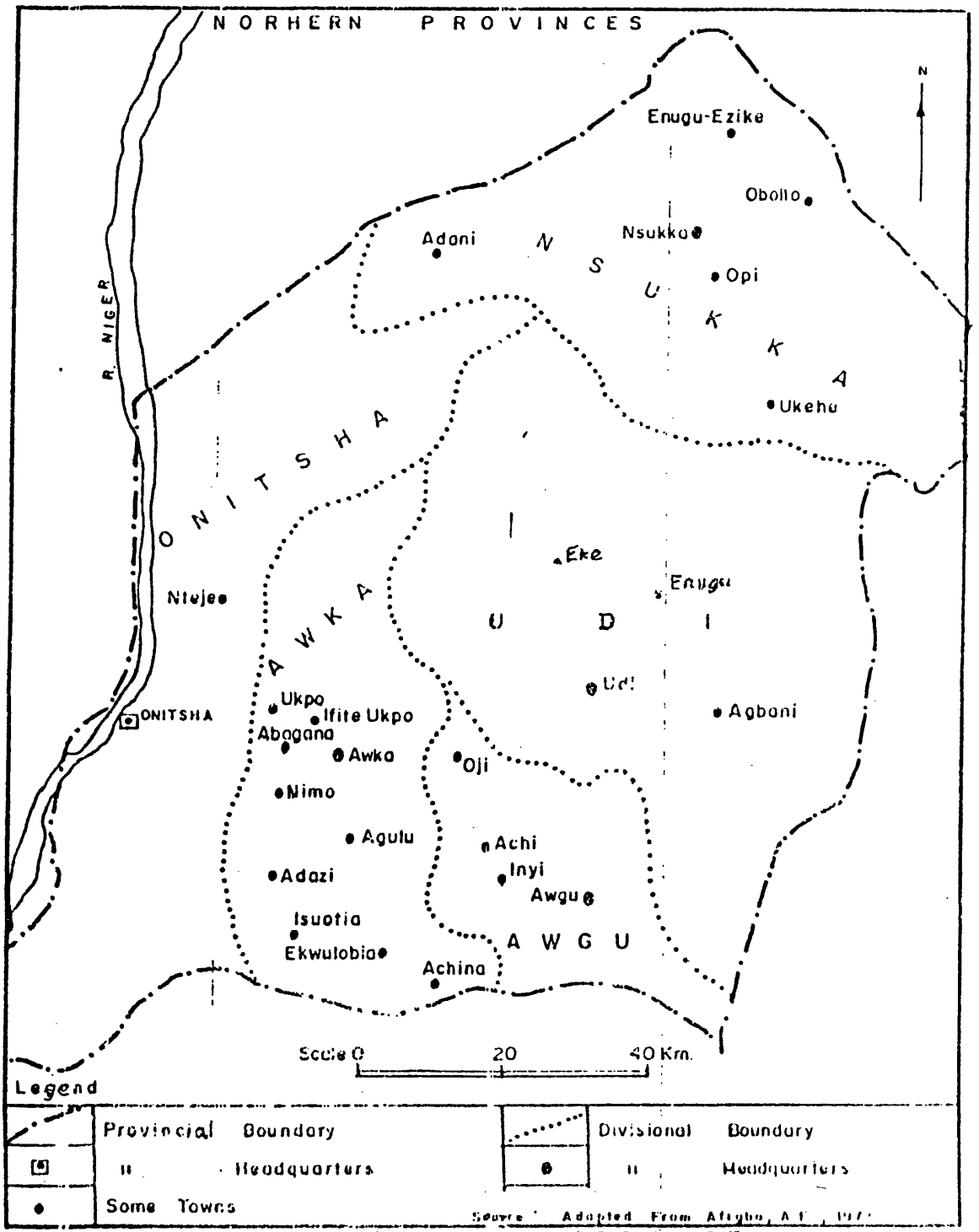

Fig.2 : MAP OF ONITSHA PROVINCE

Onitsha and the Province, quite significantly too, became the cradle and the most dynamic area from where many major church lay associations and movements which later spread to the rest of Eastern Nigeria sprang up.[31] Secondly, with the exception of perhaps Onitsha town itself, the greater part of this area easily qualifies as the most typical of Igbo heartland. Here are situated such historic Igbo communities like Awka people – long famous throughout Igboland for their work as smiths; the Nri people, with their priestly aristocracy, who monopolized all religious cleansing ceremonies (Ikpu alu) and title-taking (ichi echichi) throughout the length and breadth of Igboland.[32] Indeed, some writers have conceded to Nri people who inhabit part of Awka Division of the Onitsha Province the evolution of Igbo traditional religion.[33] In this area too are Umudioka people who specialized in ritual cicatrization and often accompanied Awka smiths and Nri priests in their travels to different parts of Igboland. It was in Igbo Ukwu – a town also in this province – that rich cultural artifacts showing Igbo civilisation in about 900 A.D. were discovered by Thurstan Shaw.[34] The whole area therefore can be designated as "the heartland of Igbo culture."[35]

Another factor which commends this area for a special study is that it is one of the most densely populated part of Igboland.[36] It contains an almost countless number of autonomous village democracies which scholars agree is a special characteristic of Igboland,[37] but which in the colonial era, appeared

chaotic and ungovernable to the colonial officers. Thus commenting on Awka Division in particular a colonial administrator had this to say:

> I am directed to inform you that His Excellency considers that as regards Awka Division, there is today no survival of any tribal system claiming the traditional loyalty and respect of the people, to supply us with the foundations upon which any system of Native Administration can be built up; and that this area must now be definitely marked as one in which direct rule by the District officer is applicable.[38]

It is significant to note that where the British considered it difficult, if not hopeless, to establish their native administration, the Church made such a great success in her mission. This goes to show the extent in which laity participation determined the Church's success since both the Church and the Government worked in the same area and among the same people! There is no doubt that the area witnessed great and rapid progress in evangelisation as shown below by the quick creation of parishes and residential stations within twenty years – 1932-1952.[39]

TABLE I: ONITSHA PROVINCE RESIDENTIAL STATIONS 1932-1952

Town	Year made a Parish	Town	Year made a Parish
Nsukka	1933	Agbani	1951
Enugu	1933	Awgu	1951
Maku	1939	Nnokwa	1951
Dunukofia	1939	Obollo-Eke	1951
Achina	1945	Onitsha (Umuoji)	1952
Akpu	1945	Aku	1952
Udi	1945	Awka	1952
		Nimo	1952

The Onitsha Province was bounded in the north by the southern boundaries of Kabba and Benue Provinces; in the east by the western boundary of Ogoja Province; in the south by the northern boundary of Owerri Province and in the west by the River Niger. Today it lies within Anambra State of Nigeria. The table below shows its area and population by 1936.[40]

TABLE 2: ONITSHA PROVINCE 1936

Division	Area in sq. Miles	Population
Onitsha	1,343	290,177
Awka	671	188,851
Awgu	424	104,501
Udi	1,318	264,063
Nsukka	1,121	248,731

As regards education, especially at the primary school level, this area could boast of a number of schools established from early time by the churches, especially the Roman Catholic Mission (RCM) and the Church Missionary Society (CMS), which were the two principal Missions working in the province. Table three shows the situation by 1939 in Onitsha Division alone.[41] The above considerations have warranted this study which will hopefully lead to a greater appreciation of African laity's distinct contribution to the planting and growth of Christianity in Africa.

TABLE 3: ONITSHA DIVISION EDUCATION STATISTICS, 1939

Type of School	Denomination	No. of Schools	Enrolment		
Assisted			Boys	Girls	Total
"	Government	2	584	128	712
"	Anglican (CMS)	16	4,605	1,551	6,156
"	Catholic (RCM)	20	6,465	1,438	7,903
"	Methodist	1	213	20	233
Unassisted (1938 figures)					
"	Anglican	220	9,538	3,300	12,838
"	Catholic	304	21,637	2,216	23,853
"	Methodist	24	540	15	555
"	1st Century Gospel Church	4	126	42	168
"	Salvation Army	2	195	67	262
"	Aro Settlement Ndike (Non-denominational)	1	88	35	123
"	West African Episcopal Church	1	34	10	44

CHAPTER ONE

THE EFFECTS OF COLONIAL RULE ON EARLY CATHOLIC CHURCH GROWTH - THE ROLE OF CHIEFS

The role which chiefs[1] played or were to play in the growth of the Catholic Church in the area covered in this study seemed providentially determined at the very beginning of Catholic Church evangelisation of Igboland and other parts of Eastern Nigeria. The pioneer missionaries who arrived at Onitsha in December 1885 to plant the Catholic faith were warmly received by Obi Anazonwu, the traditional ruler of Onitsha at the time, during their first contact with him and his cabinet - Ndichie. Thus did Father Lutz remark later in their Journal:

> His majesty appeared before us wearing a beautiful gold crown on his head. He shook hands with us im most cordial welcome and made us sit down by his side ..... All the chiefs were convoked. The king's brother, the King's eldest son, the first class and second class chiefs and many notables of the place were ass mbled. ..... Now seated in the assembly, we related the object of our visit. It was to get permission to set up a mission. The King showed himself very disposed towards us and our request to be allowed to settle in his domain.[2]

Later the king donated a parcel of land to the missionaries to establish their first mission. The land was said to be given "free of all tribute and dues."[3]

Despite Father Lutz's initial elation at the friendliness of Obi Anazonwu and his chiefs, he was not too naive to presume the king's goodwill was based on a religious ground. Anazonwu did not become a Christian. Besides the land donation to the Catholic Church, there was no evidence of any other special favour he bestowed on the Church. Perhaps, he was motivated by the material advantage he must have expected from that set of missionaries — the second since the Church Missionaries Society (CMS) settled in Onitsha.[4] Again, growing dissillusionment with the CMS was another probable factor. There had been violent clashes between the local people, especially the notables, and the mission converts in many areas, especially with regard to the people's custom and tradition. As Ekechi noted,

> In the eyes of the chiefs and others the Christians and their teachers had become, in fact, intolerable nuisances in the land. Public opinion seemed to be that it were better the missionaries had not co[illegible].[5]

That was the period shortly before the arrival of the Catholic missionaries in Onitsha. With their arrival, and judging from the different methods they quickly used in convert — making, the people saw a change for the better and were generally more disposed to welcome them. Again, as Ekechi remarked, "they (the Catholic missionaries) appeared to many local people as a different kind of white man: a kind who came for the

welfare of the people."[6]

What however must have made Father Lutz and his successors pledge their faith on the use of chiefs for evangelisation in the period before the Warrant Chief system of administration[7] began – which period forms a greater part of this chapter – was the conversion of a wellknown personality of Aguleri in 1891. He was Joseph Ogbuanyinya Onyekomeli Idigo.[8] Unlike Obi Anazonwu of Onitsha, Idigo took the initiative to invite the missionaries to Aguleri. Again, he was not a ruler of the status of Obi Anazonwu. Indeed, he was not a natural ruler but an influential and successful trader. It was his children and successors who were later crowned 'king', or rather officially made 'chiefs' as a result of the introduction of the Warrant Chief system of administration.[9] His title Ogbuanyinya (literally 'killer of horses') was the highest obtainable in the community. Idigo's connection with the whitemen probably began about 1884 when the National African Company (called the Royal Niger Company from 1886) first visited Aguleri. He alone was bold enough to welcome their merchants. The following year some of the notables in Aguleri signed an agreement with the company, ceding part of their land to the company, which in turn promised to protect the chiefs and their people from attacks by their neighbours.[10] Although Idigo did not sign this first agreement, he was the chief signatory to a later and more authoritative treaty in 1891.[11]

Chief Joesph Ogbuanyinya Idigo I

In 1881, on hearing about the Catholic missionaries in Onitsha, Idigo sent emissaries to invite Father Lutz to visit Aguleri. In 1890 Father Lutz sent Father Joseph Bubendorf to Aguleri to survey the possibility of opening a mission there. He was warmly received by Idigo who reportedly gave him one of his sons to accompany him to Onitsha to attend the newly-opened mission school there. More visits by the Fathers from Onitsha were made. Father Lutz himself visited Aguleri on 22 May and discussed with Idigo the question of land for a mission. Idigo readily offered him the land for the mission. He also agreed to renounce polygamy and idolatry and become a Christian. Despite threats by some diviners (dibea) and chiefs of Aguleri that his proposed embrace of Christianity would spell doom to him, Idigo remained steadfast. The climax of his effort to become a Christian came on 3rd December 1891 when he and six of his children were baptized by Father Lutz. Earlier he had dismissed all his wives but one who was ready to become a Christian. Summarizing the immediate impact on his conversion Ekechi said,

> Within a short space of time he (Joseph Idigo) was serving as a catechist — preaching the Gospel to his neighbours and friends. For the people of Aguleri and nearby villages he had become the symbol of a new age — a symbol to be emulated. The chief of Nsube (Nsugbe), for instance, promised in 1894 to become a Christian like Chief Idigo provided the missionaries would establish themselves in his town as they did in Aguleri.[12]

Despite Chief Idigo's personal commitment to the new faith, it is necessary to note that those who joined him did so freely by emulating him. No one was forced to join. Indeed he himself lost whatever traditional powers or privileges he previously had. In this regard, his conversion was quite different from that of the next important chief who used his position as a Christian and chief to promote greatly the cause of Christianity. The latter chief was John Samuel Okolo Okosi of Onitsha.

Okosi's position as a Christian chief marked a turning point in the role of chiefs in the growth of the Christian churches. Henceforth it made a great difference whether a chief became a Christian or not; whether he was a Protestant or a Roman Catholic. These changes were not unconnected with the Warrant Chief system of administration which became effective in most parts of Igboland from 1900, and which was the main political heritage of the British colonial regime until its abolition many years later.

The Warrant Chiefs

Before discussing the career of Chief John Samuel Okolo Okosi of Onitsha we shall briefly examine the Warrant Chief system of administration under which many of the chiefs that aided or hindered the growth of the Catholic Church in the Onitsha Province operated as

from 1900.[13] With the increased control which the British Protectorate Government gained over the interior of Igboland and other parts of Southeastern Nigeria, the British began to set up Native Courts as from 1900. By 1904 the Native Courts in the Southern Nigeria Protectorate already numbered sixty.[14] For instance in Awka Division of Onitsha Province, native courts were opened thus: Awka 1905, Agulu 1907, Ujalli (Ajalli) 1908, Abagana 1910, Isuofia 1911 and Achalla 1912.[15] The courts were the main means of political administration of the area. There were two main types — lower or Minor Courts, and higher or Native Councils. The former were presided over by a local warrant chief, whereas the latter were presided over by British Administrative Officers. A warrant chief was a chief who was appointed by the British political officer and given judicial powers which he exercised through the Native Courts.[16] As was noted by Afigbo, "the two classes of courts were to be guided, as far as possible, by native law and custom not opposed to natural morality and humanity... When required the courts were also to administer some other laws of the Protectorate."[17] Besides the exercise of judicial powers, the courts were also endowed with specific executive and legislative powers. Thus they could make by-laws for the maintenance of peace and order; revoke and amend such laws. They could deal with matters like the construction and maintenance of roads, the establishment of landmarks, the prevention and abatement of nuisance.[18]

The courts operated through the help of ancillary staff like court clerks and court messengers. With so much power vested in the warrant chiefs, and although their authority was mainly political, it was easy for chiefs to extend their power to matters other than political and the general maintenance of law and order. That many of them encroached on religious affairs will be seen below.

John Samuel Okolo Okosi I of Onitsha

As was said above, John Samuel Okolo Okosi of Onitsha was the first chief under the new political system that used his position as a chief to further the cause of the Christian religion, and in particular the Catholic Church. John's association with the Christian churches began quite early. Indeed he was said to have been one of the first well-to-do young men from Onitsha to become a CMS convert.[19] In 1862 he was baptized and became an enthusiastic member of the church. Three years later, following a wave of desertion of the church by many former converts due to cultural disorientation caused by the Christian religion, John left the CMS and reverted to a polygamous life, despite efforts of the missionaries to persuade him not to apostasize.[20]

About 1890 John was reconverted to the Catholic faith.[21] Shortly afterward, he became once more a zealous member of the church. He accompanied Father

Lutz during his first visit to Aguleri on 27 May 1890.[22] Following the death of Obi Anazonwu, the king of Onitsha in 1899, John stood as one of the candidates vying for the throne. No doubt the goodwill and popularity he had won from the missionaries, coupled with the fact that the rival family (Umuezearoli) had two contestants, helped John to win the contest. In 1900 he was chosen as the new king of Onitsha. One would be inclined to agree with Osu that John's connection with the missionaries was only one (and perhaps, not the major) cause of his election. Osu argues,

> Inspite of this help Samuel Okosi could still have won the dispute. The influence of the missionaries and the Government had little effect on the people's decision. The basic point was that Okosi was in a more advantageous position than his rivals. The people did not need to be convinced by strangers to accept this fact. Moreover the adherents of the missionaries were still a small minority of the population.[23]

Whether they were directly instrumental to his election or not, the Catholic missionaries did not underestimate its possible advantage to their cause. A few days after his enthronement, and especially after his official recognition by the British Government, the Fathers in Onitsha noted with optimism in their diary: "Let us hope for some happy days in future."[24]

Soon after his election, John went straight into action to promote the cause of the Catholic Church, in addition to his duties as king. To begin with, he

showed himself as an example of fidelity to the Christian faith by rejecting whatever traditional homage that was paid to a king which he considered idolatrous. For instance, he forbade his subjects from prostrating and kissing the floor when before him as custom demanded. This he considered was honour due to God alone. It was said that on the day of his election he refused to offer the customary sacrifice which required him to kill a goat to appease the River (Niger) goddess.[25] He hung a crucifix over his throne for people to venerate. Furthermore, he gave the church a large piece of land to build a school and a little chapel. When work on the project was completed, John helped in the teaching of catechism in the evenings.[26] He encouraged pupils to attend school. Indeed his role in spreading literary education, which in turn gave Onitsha citizens a leading position early in public and commercial life as well as in the church and school, earned him to this day the title of Eze akwukwo nya ka Onitsha jili fu uzo (which literally means "the king who through book knowledge brought enlightenment to Onitsha people").[27]

Perhaps, nothing shows better John's enthusiastic commitment to the spread of the new Catholic religion than his own words in a letter of gratitude he wrote to Pope Leo XIII when he (the Pope) honoured him with a gift of a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary on February 15, 1901. The letter in part reads,

> The present situation now is that my people now receive Christian religious instruction, our schools are teeming with school children and a large number of people join in praying the Divine Office every Sunday. It is indeed a great consolation for a Christian king to see his subjects following his religion and turning their backs completely on the worship of idols... The law against the killing of twins is now faithfully upheld... All the towns and communities in the lower Niger are now disposed to receive the Gospel. Therefore send missionaries in great numbers...[28]

Despite his keen interest in spreading the Catholic faith, there is no evidence that John pursued an aggressive policy towards the CMS or non-Catholics. The main effect of his adherence to the Catholic Church was the positive gain for the Catholic Church. Catholic schools grew in size and number. Indeed, in 1901 there was already talk of the establishment of a Roman Catholic High School in Onitsha.[29] This school, established that year (1901), pulled many people, including Protestants, to the Catholic Church. John waged a war not so much against the CMS as against the local customs and tradition which he considered were against the Christian faith. John's long reign (1900-1931) no doubt profited the Catholic Church and marked a period of great expansion of the church in the Igbo heartland. The missionaries must have been convinced from that time onward of the wisdom of using the local chiefs in evangelisation.

These chiefs fall into two broad groups – first, those who were not Christians but gave strong support to

a Christian Church in their domain; secondly, chiefs who not only supported a Christian Church but became adherents themselves. The latter group were fewer but their effects were more powerful and profitable to the churches. In the first, one can mention chiefs like Onyeama of Eke, Ojiako of Adazi and Odimegwu of Ihiala. The second group included chiefs Michael Onyiuke of Nimo, Michael Eze of Ukpo, Solomon Ezeokoli of Nnobi and Henry Umeadi of Igbariam. Since it is not possible here to examine the careers of all these chiefs,[30] we shall in the rest of this chapter concentrate first on the activities of chief Ojiako of Adazi (representing the first group) and chief Michael Onyiuke of Nimo and Solomon Ezeokoli of Nnobi (representing both the Catholic supporters and Protestant supporters in the second group). Their careers, in a way, typify the fortunes, or otherwise, of Christian Churches under the Warrant Chief system of Native administration. In the case of the second group the policy adopted by the chiefs could be likened to that of the European Reformation princes, namely, Cujus regio ejus religio, that is, the king's religion should prevail throughout his domain.

Chief Ojiako Ezenne of Adazi

Chief Ojiako Ezenne was the first warrant chief of Adazi – a town which, as will be seen in chapter 3, became the main centre of Catholic Church expansion in

Chief Ojiako Ezenne

Awka and parts of Orlu and Okigwe divisions in the Onitsha and Owerri Provinces of the former Eastern Region of Nigeria. From his first acquaintance in 1912 with the Catholic missionaries living in Nteje Ojiako took a great interest in them, especially Father Albert Bubendorf. His desire to bring the Catholic missionaries into Adazi in 1912 and to strengthen his association with the Catholic Church in later years was due to two main factors. To begin with, there was rivalry between him and a neighbouring chief, Giniwefolu Onyiuke of Nimo. Chief Onyiuke, living in Nimo, was closer to the seat of colonial power at Awka, than Ojiako in Adazi. Ojiako was convinced that bringing the Catholic Church into Adazi would help him develop his domain which suffered considerable disadvantage at first because of its distance from Awka. Ojiako had another major reason for wanting friendship with the Catholic missionaries. As a warrant chief, he was not particularly liked by the British administrative officers. Indeed, one of them, John Ross, the District Officer of Awka, made the following statement about him in his Intelligence Report on Native Administration:

> He (Chief Ojiako) undoubtedly possesses some character, but at the same time is without question a rogue. Further he is only the representative of one of the Adazis, and that almost certainly not the senior Division.[31]

Another administrative officer, referring to a case in which Ojiako was involved, said, "As a District Officer,

Awka I had not a very high opinion of Ojiako's character though he certainly has personality."[32] There were different versions of the case. The official charge was that Chief Ojiako, Mbamali Akutekwe of Akwaeze and Adinugwu contrived to keep a girl, Mgbocha in pawn.[33] The case was tried at Agulu Native Court, then transferred to the District Court in Awka and finally to the Provincial Court at Onitsha. The Resident upheld the charge of pawning against Ojiako and ordered a withdrawal of his warrant.[34] This was done on 26 October 1931 but later (6 January 1932), following a plea from the District Officer, John Ross, Ojiako's warrant was restored to him. Although the exact facts of the case cannot be ascertained from oral and written sources, it would appear that Ojiako actually kept Mgbocha – the daughter of Mbamali in pledge for Obiagwu of Umuchukwu (Ndizogu). Obiagwu himself had earlier bailed Mbamali in a case which Mbamali lost in Ojiako's court for which he was fined £20. Since Mbamali could not pay the fine, he borrowed the money from Obiagwu, his friend, to pay it. Mbamali then gave his daughter, Mgbocha to Obiagwu as a pledge. Chief Ojiako was said to have found this out and in turn threatened Obiagwu for his action. The chief later gave Obiagwu back £20 and instead kept the girl, Mgbocha, in his house with a view to marrying her when she grew up. It was at this stage that Ojiako himself, together with Mbamali and Obiagwu (Adinugwu?) were charged at court for pawning and slave dealing.[35]

The Mgbocha case drew a lot of public interest and greatly tarnished Ojiako's image before many people, especially the British administrative officers, although he was in the end exonerated. Ojiako was also accused of instigating a war between Adazi and Umuori town in which the latter was wiped out. He was convicted and sentenced in 1938 to one year in Awka prison but served only nine months.[36] Speaking about his father's unpopularity Michael Ojiako, the son of Chief Ojiako said:

> Many people accused my father of illegal levy of £4.00 with which, they said, he built a storeyed house. The case was brought before the Resident at Onitsha. After investigation, the Resident (Mr. Mains?) struck it out for want of evidence.[37]

From the foregoing it could be seen why Chief Ojiako was unpopular with the British officers. They regarded him as grossly corrupt and highhanded, enriching himself unlawfully.

Ojiako learnt about the Catholic missionaries through a friend, Obiweluzo of Adazi, who himself had come in contact with Chief Michael Obinegbo of Ukpo (Ifite-Ukpo). The Catholic missionaries reached Ifite-Ukpo from Nteje, and it was Chief Obinegbo who welcomed them there in 1910.

Chief Ojiako made further enquiries about the Fathers and invited them to Adazi. The Fathers first settled at the market-place in Adazi in 1912, following the invitation by Ojiako. A church/school was quickly

built for them at Be Nwabo. Later Ojiako harboured them in his house for about twelve years until a permanent house was built for them between 1923 and 1925.

To encourage pupils to attend school, Ojiako paid the fees for all the pupils for twelve years. He also helped the rapid growth of the Catholic Church in Adazi by preventing the establishment of any other church there. The CMS in particular tried to establish itself in Adazi through the efforts of a cousin of Ojiako – Jacob Ugboaja, of a neighbouring town – Adazi-Enu. Jacob led a delegation of their members to Chief Ojiako. Ojiako told them that he did not want two different churches in Adazi. Adazi remains to this day a Catholic strong-hold. Ojiako's son, Michael, who is the present traditional ruler of Adazi, recalls how he dismissed a party of the CMS who in 1983 tried to gain a foothold in Adazi. He told the CMS party, "I would not grant a request my father had refused to grant in his life time."[38]

Ojiako strongly believed that the Catholic Church brought more enlightenment and quicker development than the CMS which had earlier established a church in Agulu – a neighbouring town to Adazi. The CMS agent at Agulu was a Sierra Leonean – Mr. Rollings. As was their practice, the CMS emphasized church service and bible-reading in the open squares rather than formal schooling. Describing Chief Ojiako's reaction to this, his son said:

> My father did not want them. He preferred more secular education... When the Fathers arrived, they introduced formal education immediately and footballing. My father made a law requiring every young male to attend school.[39]

Chief Michael Muoyekwu Onyiuke II of Nimo (1917-1937)

As in all other Igbo communities the British, following the "pacification" of Nimo town about 1908, set up warrant chiefs in various parts of the town to help them administer it.[40] There is sharp disagreement as to who was the first warrant chief in Nimo; which of them first welcomed or invited the Catholic missionaries to Nimo.[41] In Nimo the Onyiuke family claims to have produced the first warrant chief of the town. According to Albert Onyiuke – the grandson of Chief Giniwefolu Onyiuke I of Nimo – it was Giniwefolu Onyiuke (his grandfather) that the British chose as the first warrant chief.[42] This was in recognition of his gallantry during the British expedition on Nimo. He said the chief ruled Nimo till his death in 1920. He added that from 1917, due to old age, the chief handed power over to his son, Michael Onyiuke, who continued to rule the town till his death in 1937. Albert further asserted that it was chief Giniwefolu Onyiuke that first invited and welcomed the Catholic missionaries to Nimo when they arrived there about 1911.[43] This claim is very much contested by other informants.[44] These say that it was Chief Akunatu Nwaelom of Etiti village in

Chief Michael Muoyekwu Onyiuke

Nimo who first welcomed the missionaries and provided land for the first Catholic mission in the town. F.C. Agubata argues that the first chief of Nimo to be given warrant by the British was Analikwu of Egbengwu village, Nimo, though he did not rule for long and was probably ineffective as a chief.[45]

Disagreement over which warrant chief first received the missionaries or provided them with land for one purpose or the other in the early years of evangelisation is not peculiar to Nimo. It is a common phenomenon in the study of the relationship between chiefs and the Christian Churches. Generally, a powerful chief would lay claims to the work of another chief less powerful or wellknown. A case in point may be cited in Ihiala – a town some thirty kilometres southeast of Onitsha. Here Chief Odimegwu Igwegbe, who was instrumental to the establishment of the Catholic mission in Ihiala in 1910, thereafter seemed to lay claims to all other transactions with the Mission. When the Catholic Church wanted to acquire land for a new convent and school, Odimegwu was cited in the application for the land lease.[46] It was the careful scrutiny by the District Officer at Onitsha that revealed that Odimegwu had nothing to do with the land except in negotiating its acquisition. In his memorandum to the Resident in Onitsha he said,

> The grantor, named on the form – ODIMEGWU – is wrong. He is merely a member of Court, through him the Mission approached the owners. The ownership of the

> land is vested in two persons — one Alisigwe — the okpala of the Umuadaobihi family of Amamu quarter of Ihiala and the other, one Michael Madubonye...[47]

Indeed, further investigation showed that the land actually belonged to more families — 17 from Ozoakwa quarter, and 19 from Amamu quarter.[48] This little incident shows to what extent a powerful warrant chief could lay claims to what others did, or what belonged to others. Because the mission authorities acted through the chiefs, they too could easily be misled.

The above example calls for caution in determining the precise part a warrant chief played in the planting of the church in a given area. Although the issue of which warrant chief in Nimo first invited the Catholic missionaries cannot be resolved here, an account of the early life of Chief Michael Onyiuke — the son of Giniwefolu Onyiuke — would seem to show that Giniwefolu was not at first warm toward the Catholic missionaries. Michael's father strongly refused to send him to school shortly after the missionaries had opened one in Nimo. All Michael's pleadings fell on deaf ears. To further dissuade Michael from going to school, Giniwefolu (his father) promised to initiate him into all the customary titles in Nimo as compensation. But Michael was determined to go to school. Finding no way to win over his father to his desire, Michael bolted from home and went to Abagana where he lived with a relative called Ezepue. At Abagana Michael began schooling at

the CMS school there. If Michael's father had initially welcomed the missionaries, as his grandson Albert claimed, it would be difficult to explain his apathy to the school which missionaries usually used as one of their first bait to attract people to the church. Therefore, it is more likely that it was another chief, and not Michael's father, that first welcomed the missionaries to Nimo and enabled them to procure land for the first mission. Father Jordan, using an eye witness report, stated that the new mission had already existed before Michael's father became formally disposed to it.[49]

There is however no doubt that Michael himself was largely instrumental to the expansion and consolidation of the Catholic Church in Nimo later on. As was said above, Michael's desire to go to school forced him to leave Nimo and go to Abagana. There he was disappointed at the school curriculum. Igbo, and not English, was taught. Michael decided to leave Abagana. He went to Onitsha and lived with an aunt called Arude, who was a Protestant. Michael found himself once more attending a CMS school – Christ Church School, Onitsha. His opportunity to attend a Catholic school came through his association with other school boys of his age who attended Holy Trinity Catholic School, Onitsha. From them he learnt that English was taught in their school. Through further enquiries Michael became acquainted with the Fathers living at Onitsha. The superior of the

mission, Father Bisch, took an interest in young Michael. He invited him to live at the mission. Thus began Michael's long association with the Catholic Church. At the mission Michael began to attend school once more. He read up to Standard Two.

Meanwhile Michael's father, hearing of his son's new abode was very angry. He vowed to disown him or to kill him if he dared return home. His anger arose from his stern objection to his going to school, which Michael heeded not. Michael became reconciled with his father by an incident which took place later. It happened that after the Fathers had established their presence in Nimo, Michael's father was accused of being in possession unlawfully of a goat belonging to the Fathers. He was arrested and sent to prison in Achalla. Michael came to know of his father's plight. He informed the Fathers at Onitsha. They in turn contacted Father Bubendorf who administered Nimo from his base at Nteje. Father Bubendorf intervened on behalf of Onyiuke. He gave Michael a letter for the British officer whose peace-keeping troop was stationed at Achalla. On reading the letter the officer released Onyiuke. Onyiuke later came to know the role his son Michael played in the matter. The incident reconciled father and son. Onyiuke revoked his earlier oath to disown his son. Above all he became convinced of the value of school education. It was probably after this incident that he became better disposed toward the Fathers in Nimo.

Michael succeeded his father as warrant chief shortly afterwards. Under his regime the Catholic Church enjoyed greater patronage. Nimo became the new seat of the Catholic Church in Awka division from about 1918. Nteje – the former headquarters was temporarily closed due to many reasons.[50] Paganism was rife and deep-rooted in Nteje; parents were reluctant to send their children to school. Father Bubendorf took a step which exacerbated the situation. About 1913 he was reported to have forced school children to wade into a piece of land – Ofia Ogene – which the people considered sacred and dangerous. An eyewitness[51] reported that many of the pupils came out of the land sick. Some later died. The incident made the people more antagonistic towards the Fathers. Many withdrew their children from school. Meanwhile Nimo provided a welcome alternative town to the Fathers at Nteje, especially with Michael now as a warrant chief and a Christian.[52]

Michael helped the church to expand in Nimo. The Fathers shortly afterwards left Nimo for Adazi about 1924 which they made their new base. The reasons for their leaving have been examined elsewhere.[53] Although the Fathers left Nimo it continued to remain a strong Catholic centre. Before their departure, they established a technical workshop where skills such as carpentry, masonry and tailoring were taught to the people. One of the surviving pioneer carpenters – Eugene Ikewelugo – trained at the workshop, recalls how he and other trainees were on many occasions sent to distant

missions to help build new schools.[54] His training at the workshop lasted for two years. The instructor was Philip Ochuba from Nise – a nearby town. At Akokwa, a town some sixty kilometres from Nimo, Eugene and other men went to erect a church bell. Because of the technical school, Nimo people excelled in various skills and were wellknown all over Onitsha Province as artisans. There is no doubt that Michael took a great interest in the technical school. His palace, built with burnt bricks, was the work of pupils trained at the workshop.[55] But it was, perhaps in his help to strengthen the Catholic Church in Nimo and establish it in the neighbouring towns that Michael will be remembered. In Nimo Michael used his power and position as warrant chief to try to prevent the establishment of the CMS church. He obstructed all attempts by some people to give the CMS land. The land on which the only CMS school in the town was eventually built was donated by Samuel Agwulonu from his personal land.

At Ukpo, a town almost adjacent to Nimo, Michael brought his full weight as warrant chief and a staunch Catholic to aid a Catholic minority there.[56] The warrant chief in Ukpo was Michael Eze. He was an ardent Protestant (Anglican). His father, who ruled the town as warrant chief, unlike Michael Onyiuke's father, appreciated the value of education. He sent his son Michael early to the CMS school in the town. On succeeding his father as warrant chief, Michael Eze

vowed to prevent the establishment of any other Christian church in Ukpo. Whenever the Catholics wanted to acquire land for a school/church, Eze used various measures to frustrate their plans. According to Emmanuel Akukalia – an eyewitness – Eze argued that a new (Catholic) school/church would increase the damage done to the people's raffia palms which were used for making roofs of the buildings. Besides, he said the CMS would be opposed to having such a school built as its presence would create division and rivalry in the town. Believing that the CMS would never consent to having a Catholic school in the town, Eze pitched his consent on Catholics convincing the CMS to allow them build their own school and church. Recalling how he beat the chief on this point, Akukalia said,

> I went to meet them (the CMS church committee) on the matter. The first person I met was Joseph Akabuike – my friend. He was a CMS. Another was Aaron Okpaku – again, a friend. Both agreed, saying that many towns had each two different churches... They summoned a committee meeting. As is the custom, I approached them with palm wine to present my request. I told them we no longer felt safe going to church outside our town. They were convinced with my argument and there and then consented, provided we were able to build our own church...[57]

Eventually the Catholics of Ukpo jumped that hurdle. But the chief did not give up his resistance. He tried to place new obstacles on the way of the Catholics. His tactics included refusing to approve land chosen for the Catholic school/church. As warrant

chief his consent in this matter was vital. Again, he asked the Catholics to seek approval from another body in the town. This was the Egbe Di n'Ugo Age-grade. Its voice on various town affairs carried great weight. Much to Chief Eze's disappointment the age-grade supported the Catholics. The chief was finally forced to allow the Catholics to build their own school/church in the town. Land was provided by Peter Amaku. This was rejected due to its location. Another piece of land was obtained and the new school/church was built. It however continued to totter, because, unlike the CMS church, it did not enjoy the patronage of the local chief. The Catholics found a patron instead in Chief Michael Onyiuke of Nimo. Having a teacher was vital to the establishment of a school at that time. No teacher would take the risk of living in a town without a guarantee of his safety, usually given by an influential member of the town, and more often, by a local chief. Ukpo Catholics approached Chief Onyiuke for help. To ensure safety for the teacher Michael demanded that Ukpo Catholics should pledge their own lives as surety. Narrating the incident on the day the agreement with the chief was made, Akukalia, who led the Ukpo delegation,said,

> On reaching the chief's house with my two companions, I narrated our mission once more to the chief. I dwelt particularly on the issue of pledging our lives as surety. My two companions reiterated their willingness to sign, if I did so... Onyiuke then called a teacher, Mr. Nwauto of Awomama, and introduced him as our new teacher.

> He got us to sign the agreement.
> He himself and Mr. Nwauto signed.
> Next, we bargained for his salary.
> The chief said five shillings; we
> said three shillings... Finally
> we agreed on three shillings per month.[58]

Mr. Nwauto thereafter went to live in Ukpo as a teacher and catechist. To maintain him the church members levied themselves three pence a month. With difficulty they paid the teacher for a year. Later he left as they could no longer pay his meagre salary. An appeal was made for another teacher. This time he came from Adazi — the central parish. The new teacher did not stay for long due to the same reason. A third teacher, Mr. Maduelosi, arrived. He was to be paid twelve shillings a month. To meet this, the Christians increased their church tax to sixpence a month per adult member. Maduelosi was owed for four months. He sued the church committee at Abagana Native Court. Due to the intervention of Chief Michael Onyiuke, the church committee was given time to pay the debt owed to the teacher.

Onyiuke helped the Catholics of Ukpo in many other ways. Being more powerful than Chief Eze of Ukpo, he often got unfavourable court judgements on Catholics cancelled.[59] In one area his effort needed special mention. This was the issue of membership of the native councils. In many towns Christians were barred from membership of the councils because they had no traditional titles like Ozo. The inability of

Christians to take native titles was due principally to the attitude of the Christian Churches at the time on title-taking. Both the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches regarded the native titles as un-Christian. At the First Congress held by the Catholic Church in the then Prefecture of Southern Nigeria in January 1915 the native titles were specifically condemned.[60] In the CMS Church the question of title-taking was also hotly debated. Their Igbo agents defended title-taking vigorously and it was said that some court clerks produced by the missions took titles without any desire to request the guidance of the white missionaries.[61]

To fully understand the crucial issue title-taking raised for Christians one must remember that in pre-colonial times (and many years later) titles conveyed on an individual in Igboland highly coveted privileges and authority in the society. Such privileges and authority have been well summed up by Ilogu thus:

> In most Ibo (Igbo) areas only the Ozo men hold political offices and represent their families and lineages in the village group councils or preside over settlement of cases, making of covenants and the establishment of new cults. Socially, they belong to the noblemen's rank – a social status marked out by honour accorded to those holding that position. They also take precedence in all public entertainments and feasts irrespective of their age.[62]

As was said above, the official Catholic position on title-taking remained unchanged till the 1960's. Pressure from Christians in many towns made the Church

authority reluctantly open dialogue with traditional title-holders in some Igbo communities. A further source of pressure on the Church was some British colonial officials. They felt she should yield ground. The case of Onitsha town will be briefly examined below to show some of the difficulties encountered in trying to settle title-taking by Christians. Onitsha presents a typical case indeed because there structural differentation is well pronounced.[63] The menfolk take two main titles – Ozo and Ndichie. The first is open to all adult male who are free-born citizens of the town and who can afford the huge cost of the initiation fees. The title confers on the individual the traditional order of priesthood as well as the highest degree of social standing. His priestly function includes officiating at the family shrine – a function a non-Ozo man cannot perform. In social circles he takes precedence over a non-title holder, whatever his age.

The initiation ceremonies include certain aspects which the Christian churches consider idolatrous or superstitious. Since the advent of Christianity in Igboland there has been sharp disagreement between the title-holders and the churches as to what is permissible and not permissible; what is idolatrous and not idolatrous. The reforms of Obi John Samuel Okosi left the titles virtually untouched. A serious move to "reform" Ozo title and make it agreeable to Christians was first made during the reign of James Okosi

(1935-1961) – the successor to John Okosi. The timing was, in a way, auspicious, for it was about the same time the British Colonial Government was undertaking a reform of the local government system of administration, following the Aba Women's Revolt in 1929[64] and the collapse of the Warrant Chief system of Administration. Donald Cameron, the Governor of Nigeria, embarked on a number of reforms aimed at involving more and more people in both the administration of justice and in political matters. One of the key areas touched was the question of membership of the native councils. Christians complained they were refused membership because they had no traditional titles.

In Onitsha Obi James Okosi opened discussion with Bishop Heerey on the question of allowing Catholics to take native titles. In one such letters Obi James Okosi outlined a proposal towards a "settlement". Among other things he gave the following four conditions:

(i) The Ozo title shall constitute only in cash payment;
(ii) That Ozo title is stripped of all pagan sacrificial and superstitious ceremonies;
(iii) That Ozo title confers on the Christian candidates (sic) no powers to perform pagan priestly functions;
(iv) That payment of cost of title, presentation of staff (the insignia of titleship) and invitation by candidate of members to feast and dancing fully constitute the complete

> and accepted installation. The Authorities concerned are therefore asked to give a closer scrutiny to this matter, which should be encouraged to obviate the much discrimination, disagreement and quarrel which have been going on between the Christians and non-Christians...[65]

In his reply Bishop Heerey expressed his joy and support for any move which could bring about a reform of the Ozo title but expressed strong doubt that the above agreement had achieved such a purpose. He in particular made objection to the fourth clause in the agreement which he called the real bone of contention. He said,

> ...Nos. 1, 2 and 3 of paragraph 3 of your letter seem to offer no difficulty. But I am afraid that in No. 4 we have the real bone of contention. Is not the Staff (the insignia of titleship) the very symbol of Ancestor-worship, which the very first of the Divine Precepts forbids...
>
> Until I am satisfied about the real meaning of this Staff of Titleship, I must not agree to the taking of the Title by any of our christians. Experiments have been made in the past. They have all as far as I am aware, ended in the reversion to Paganism of the subject.[66]

It is not clear what happened after this but it appears there was a stalemate. Obi Okosi and his advisers (Ndichie) apparently refused to yield ground. They were later excommunicated by Bishop Heerey. The excommunication was, however, lifted in October 1944,

and the Catholic Church thereafter took a definitive stand against Catholics taking native titles. In a letter read in all the churches in Onitsha the bishop said,

> The question of Christians and Native Titles is now definitely settled. No Christian is allowed to take a Native Title as long as the substance of the Title remains as it is now. I warn all Christians against playing with this matter. It is repugnant to all our Christian Principles and contains ceremonies that are a denial of the One True and Everlasting God.[67]

From the tone of the above letter it is clear that the Catholic Church authorities saw no hope of resolving the matter, especially those aspects of it which they considered idolatrous but which Onitsha title-holders regarded as essential to the titles. The matter however was not limited to the Church and Onitsha people alone. The British colonial officers became involved in it. The non-inclusion of eligible Christians in the new administration, just because they were not title-holders, deprived the administration of otherwise capable persons for the native administration. The sympathy of the colonial officers however lay with the title-holders. Some British officers felt that the Christian Churches were pursuing a rather hard-line by barring Christians from taking native titles. This feeling can be seen in the following comments made by the Resident of Onitsha Province in a lengthy letter to

Catholic Church authorities in Onitsha on the question of Ozo title and Christianity. Referring to Bishop Heerey's recent ban on Christians and wanting to know whether it was definitive, he said,

> I have to observe that I was not aware of any long standing problem. Four years ago I had discussed this matter with the Church Missionary Society who decided that upon no conditions whatsoever could they permit one of their flock to take OZO – upon the ground that the OZO Society is repugnant to Christianity. (I cannot see why, – but then I am only an Administrative officer)...
> In my view – whatever the OZO Society may have been in the past – it is today, little more than an Insurance scheme. Moreover we want to attract to the Councils all the best Christian elements who by their intelligence, integrity and so forth could wield a very great influence to the good in these Councils. In many of the Councils, as you know, membership is confined to OZO men. You might reply that the obvious thing is to recast the "constitution" of the Councils. The passage of time may do this – but it would be disastrous to force the pace...[68]

To the Resident the question of reform of Ozo was not immediately relevant. In any case, he saw no justification for denying Catholics the opportunity to participate in the new local government. Of course, the situation was not peculiar to Onitsha town. At Nsukka the discrimination was such that the Resident of Onitsha Province threatened to close the courts.[69] There the dispute was between strangers (Ndi Obia) and members of the parent village (Onu). Non-title holders

were barred from membership of the native courts. The same situation existed in Abagana. That was what necessitated Chief Michael Onyiuke of Nimo to intervene on behalf of the Christians, not only the Catholics. He advised them to cause disturbance during court sessions so as to attract the attention of the British Administrative officers. The strategy worked and the District Officer forced Chief Michael Eze of Ukpo to include non-titled Christians as members of the native court.[70] In Onitsha the matter could not be resolved because the titled men were very powerful. Renewed attempts to resolve it will be treated in another chapter.[71]

Chief Solomon Ezeokoli I of Nnobi .

If Chief Michael Onyiuke of Nimo fought hard to establish and strengthen the Catholic Church in Nimo and her neighbourhood, another chief, Solomon Ezeokoli I of Nnobi did almost a similar thing for the CMS Church in Nnobi and her neighbourhood.[72] Ezeokoli's contact with the CMS was rather accidental. As a young man Solomon accompanied his father, Ezebube Akumma, who was a famous diviner and medicine man (dibea), on his itinerant visits to neighbouring towns and villages. In 1904 during one of such visits Solomon and his father went to Obosi to make charms for the people of Obosi who were engaged in a bitter war with another town, Odekpe. It was during this visit

Chief Solomon Ezeokoli I

that he met the Rev. Onyeabo (then a catechist) at Obosi. Onyeabo introduced him and his father to other CMS agents there. They preached the gospel to him, dissuading him from practising his profession as dibea. Solomon became interested in them, especially in a white lady missionary who accompanied them. Before leaving them, he fixed a date for them to visit Nnobi. This was about the time native courts were being established in parts of Onitsha Province. One of such courts was Eme Court, established in Nnewi about 1906. Chiefs were being appointed members of the courts.

Nnobi, comprising three main villages (Ebenesi, Ngo and Awuda) had three warrant chiefs.[73] They were Iba Nwalie (for Ebenesi), Ezenwabulie (for Ngo) and Ezeokigbo (for Awuda). Ezeokigbo was probably the first to be appointed a warrant chief. He attended Eme Court. Being advanced in age, he sought the assistance of his son, Omeifeukwu. Meanwhile Solomon Ezeokoli was growing in importance. News of his contact with the missionaries in Obosi had spread throughout the town. The presence of the CMS missionaries in his father's house in 1908 brought him added importance. The missionaries included the white lady he had met at Obosi. She brought with her a kerosine lamp whose unquenching light excited the people that flocked to see it. They quickly called it Oku Mmuo (spirit fire), Oku Onwufoluchi (light that burns till day-time). The missionaries distributed biscuits, rice and other food items to the people who came to

hear them. Ezeokoli pledged to help the missionaries to establish the CMS church in the town. But his fame continued to grow in another direction. He became interested in the new native courts. Though not a chief, Ezeokoli began to attend the Eme Court. The aging chief, Ezeokigbo, unsuspectingly made him one of his court assistants. Ezeokoli's ambition to become a warrant chief became fulfilled with the creation of a new native court in Nnobi in 1915. The court was to serve the thirteen neighbouring and kindred towns of Awka-Etiti, Alor, Oraukwu, Nnokwa, Abatete, Umuoji, Uke, Nnobi, Nkpor, Oba, Ojoto, Obosi and Akwukwu. It was therefore called Mbailinato Court. For reasons not clearly known Ezeokoli was chosen as the President of the new court.[74]

Armed with his new power as President of Mbailinato Court, Ezeokoli put his full weight behind the CMS Church and helped to consolidate it in Nnobi as well as spread it in other towns. Due to his close association with the CMS Church, the church was nicknamed Uka Ezeokoli (the Church of Ezeokoli) in Nnobi.

It was largely the method he used to spread the CMS Church in Nnobi, coupled with his usurpation of the presidency of the new native court and his misuse of the court, that ironically helped the establishment of the Catholic Church in the town.

The people of Awuda from where Ezeokigbo — the first warrant chief — came, resented Ezeokoli's new position as President of Mbailinato court. Seeing that his

strength came partly from his newly-acquired relationship with the CMS Church, Awuda sought for an alliance with another Christian church. The Catholic Church presented herself as a ready ally. Although the Catholic Church had been established at Nnewi as early as 1906,[75] she did not seem to have reached Nnobi – a town bordering on Nnewi – until 1911. The cause of the delay is not clear. It was perhaps due to the traditional enmity between both towns. It may also be due to the fact that contact between both towns was considered hazardous and difficult because there were as yet no roads. When the Catholic Church was established finally, she came from Onitsha – St. Mary's Church.[76]

The Catholic Church had another attraction for Awuda people, besides the rivalry between Awuda and Ngo. As in many other towns where she was established, the people of Awuda believed she was more tolerant of people's custom and tradition, unlike the CMS Church which tended to pursue a hard line. For instance, people believed one could paint one's skin with native ink (Uli), rub cam-wood dye (Ufie) and wear anklets and yet become a member.[77]

Meanwhile the move to invite Catholic missionaries to Awuda was kept a secret from Ezeckoli. Two Awuda men – Okafor Omeligbo and Eze Enyimba – took the initiative. They contacted some Awuda sons resident in Onitsha. These included Simon Udeogu and Joseph Ilikannu. They were already acquainted with the Fathers in St. Mary's

Church, Onitsha Inland. Through these men the Awuda delegation met Father Groetz and invited him to visit Awuda. It was the move to acquire more land for the Catholic Church in Nnobi that alerted Chief Ezeokoli of the presence of the Catholic Church there. He tried to forestall the move. He instigated some people (notably Okpaleke family) to put obstacles in the way of Awuda Catholics. The decision of Awuda Catholics to move to another site — Mmili Ogbo — did not deter Ezeokoli from his actions. The Catholics on their part remained undaunted and made counter actions. Ezeokoli applied all the weapons at his disposal to frustrate the Catholics. The greatest was use of the native court. Catholics were reportedly arraigned before his court on trumped-up charges and either fined or flogged. On one occasion six Church committee men were brought to his court and prosecuted for trespassing on some people's land. They were caned for disturbing the peace. On another occasion an informant recalls how his brother-in-law who became a Catholic, against, Ezeokoli's advice, was charged to court and fined £5.00 (ten naira) by Chief Ezeokoli.[78] The matter was reported to Bishop Heerey in Onitsha by Nnobi Catholic women resident there. Heerey protested to the Resident, O'Connor; Ezeokoli was arrested for unlawfully fining a citizen. He was asked to pay the same amount as penalty. Other accusations made by Catholics against Ezeokoli included inciting people to forcefully dispossess them of their property,

especially pots of palm wine which they displayed for sale in market-places; tilting court verdicts in favour of his relations or CMS church members; recruiting Catholics on forced labour. It must however be stated that Ezeokoli's actions did not arise from religious considerations alone nor were aimed at Catholics only. Whoever opposed him was likely to be punished. In this he was not different from other warrant chiefs of the time.[79]

Whereas Catholics cried out against his oppressive rule, the CMS Church gained by his patronage. Through his effort the Anglican Church spread to such towns as Abatete, Uke, Alor, Nnokwa, Oraukwu, Umuchu and Awka-Etiti.[80] The churches in these towns look to this day on St. Simon's Anglican Church Nnobi as their mother church. Despite his highhandedness, Ezeokoli brought considerable development to Nnobi. In 1945 he helped to form the Nnobi Welfare Association. As a tribute to him Nnobi people en masse officially recognized him as their traditional ruler. That was in 1946.[81]

Mission Guidelines for Using the Chiefs

The above study shows that by and large chiefs were powerful instruments in evangelisation, especially in the beginning. With time, the missionaries worked out more or less a plan of approach to them, especially in the matter of building schools. As was stated below at the end of a Catholic Mission Conference to review the

school strategy in evangelisation, the chief's role was inevitable.

> Every foundation of a school must go through the chief. Whether he is disposed or not, it ought to pass through him. But once his approval is obtained, one can go far.[82]

The procedure in the guidelines was twofold: (a) Where the chief was willing and asked for a school; (b) Where the chief and his councillors were not disposed. In the first case the guidelines state the chief is to do the following: (a) Provide ample land where the school is to be built as well as the catechist's house and a play-ground (for football); (b) Clear the ground; (c) Build there the school and catechist's house according to given dimensions; (d) Build a road to the market or to a neighbouring road (that is to link the school).[83] When all these have been done, the chief gives the mission £1 or £2 to cover the first cost for the following equipment: a black-board, registers, teachers' books, crucifix and religious pictures, etc. The above works out easily where the Mission feared no competition from another church. On the other hand, where a chief was not disposed, the guidelines recommend "a working approach can be made, be it through the young people of the village — if these want a school, or through those of a neighbouring village...."[84] Furthermore, the missionary should use such means as the offer of palm wine to bring the people to a talk. This last method, it must be remembered, is the customary way to invite

CHAPTER TWO

EARLIEST MISSIONARY COOPERATORS:

CATECHISTS, TEACHERS AND CHURCH COMMITTEE

Just as the colonial governments and business firms could hardly have functioned without the aid of clerks, foremen, artisans, telegraphists, interpreters, printers and many other lower or middle cadre workers during the colonial era,[1] so also the work of missionaries would have been well nigh impossible without the help they got from hundreds of catechists or teacher-catechists in various mission stations and towns since the early years of missionary activities in Nigeria. Indeed, tributes have been constantly paid to them by the missionaries themselves,[2] but there have been no detailed studies of their work, at least in the south-eastern part of Nigeria,[3] either by themselves or by others. Who they were, in many cases, may no longer be fully known due to scanty information about them in the mission archives. Happily, many communities still have vivid memories and oral accounts of the activities of some of those who laboured among them.

Any discussion on the contribution of catechists or teacher-catechists to Catholic Church growth here must take into consideration their deployment usually

as both school teachers and catechists until recently[4] because of the twin role of schools as the major means of proselytisation and imparting of education in the secular sense. This had advantages as well as disadvantages for the church as we will see below. To highlight this double role of teachers, the term 'teacher-catechist' will be used here to describe teachers who taught in the school and also worked as catechists, while the word 'catechist' will be used exclusively to designate persons who were engaged full-time in catechetical and other pastoral/administrative work in the missions, especially the central missions. They usually did not teach in schools like other teachers, except as teachers of religion.

It must however be admitted that, in practice, the above distinction between a teacher-catechist and a catechist as a fulltime worker was not always easy and clear-cut in the past. Perhaps some light could be thrown on this matter by looking at the manner of their appointment. It could be immediate, that is, one became a catechist and teacher following his appointment as teacher. In the words of Sylvester Izualor of Igbariam – a teacher/catechist since 1937,

> In the past whoever was a teacher was also a catechist. What the Fathers did was to mark a cross (+) beside the name of any teacher they made a catechist during the deployment of teachers. The actual choice of catechist was theirs. They knew

> the character and behaviour of every teacher. So once one was chosen, one became a catechist.

One's appointment however was not generally on a permanent basis but yearly. This was particularly so for the untrained bush-school teachers. At the end of the year such a teacher was considered to have completed his work and may or may not be redeployed for another year. "If your name appeared on the notice board," explained Emmanuel Akaenyi, "then you are redeployed. Otherwise you considered your appointment terminated."[5]

Again, the activities of a teacher-catechist were capable of great diversity. Local factors accounted for wide variations in his work. One cannot at any given point in time during the last one hundred years truly speak of an overall uniformity. An individual could combine the work of a teacher and a catechist in the full sense at the same time. Moreover, the designation of "catechist" was further determined by another factor — his location in relation to church and school. In this regard three kinds of catechists were distinguished: First, the Centre (or Central) Catechist. He usually stayed near the resident priest in a central mission. He wielded power next to the parish priest. Such catechists were generally not many in the early years of church life here. The activities of one of them will be

examined below. Secondly, the Vernacular Teacher-Catechist.[6] He usually lived in a remote mission outpost. The school where he taught was generally not approved by the government, and therefore neither supervised nor grant-aided by the government. Such schools were commonly called 'bush' schools in the past. Teachers in the above category formed the greatest number of mission catechists in the past. The activities of one of them will be examined below also. Thirdly, the 'assisted' school Teacher-Catechist.[7] He was on the staff of an assisted mission school but ran a mission outpost near a central mission as catechist.[8] Teachers in this category usually had a higher qualification than those in the other two. Again, the deployment of teachers need not follow the above pattern.

The Training of Catechists

Despite the great need the missionaries had for native agents, especially teachers and catechists, most of the Christian missions working in Southern Nigeria had no early and sustained plans to establish training institutions for them.[9] Indeed, as Ajayi noted, "until the late 1870s there was only a single Training Institution in all the five missions".[10] It belonged to the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and was established at Abeokuta in 1851. The other

missions – the Catholic Société des Missions Africaines (SMA), the Methodists, the Presbyterians and the Baptists – had none. It was in 1895 that the Presbyterian Mission established one on the east of the Niger. It was named after the Rev. Hope Waddell. Other Missions followed suit. For instance, the CMS and Qua Iboe built industrial schools at Brass and Ibeno respectively.[11] The Holy Ghost Fathers, who arrived at Onitsha in 1885, did not establish a training institute until in 1913. That was St Anthony's Training College, Igbariam, a town a couple of miles north-east of Onitsha. Hitherto, the Fathers concentrated on forming most of their teachers by themselves around the mission. Besides, earlier emphasis on the establishment of Christian villages meant that expansion and establishment of mission outposts was limited and guarded. In the Christian village experiment, catechumens or already baptized persons were gathered around the mission house. There they were taught the Christian way of life and encouraged to avoid contact with their non-Christian neighbours.[12] The closeness of the Fathers to the people and smallness of the community in the Christian village made the services of catechists less important and less urgent at the time. The Christian village experiment was however later abandoned because of many reasons. One of such reasons, and perhaps the most important, was that it did not make evangelisation reach many people quickly. Furthermore, it was a

drain on the scarce mission personnel. In the words of Father Celestine Obi, "the few available missionaries would be bogged down in one village containing a few hundreds of Christians, while thousands of villages would be completely neglected and unevangelised."[13]

First Teacher Training College

Many reasons have been given for the establishment of St Anthony's Teacher Training College, Igbariam in 1913.[14] To begin with, by 1912 the demand for schools in the hinterland towns had grown, and with this arose the need for more teachers. The Fathers could no longer cope with the work of training teachers by themselves alone around the Mission houses as they had hitherto done. A training school would help train teachers who in turn would help train other teachers, thereby producing the much needed teachers more quickly. Furthermore, the Colonial Government was beginning to be interested in the manner of the running of mission schools which received its grants, following the Education Code of 1903.[15] Such schools, known as "assisted" schools, were expected to have a higher standard and better discipline. From 1912 Lugard advocated a system of continual inspection of schools. The system was adopted for Nigeria in 1916 when it became the Education Code. According to this code, schools were to be assessed thus: 30% for discipline,

organisation, moral instruction and general tone of the school; 20% for adequacy and efficiency of the teaching staff; 40% for periodical examinations and general progress, and 10% for the buildings, equipment and general sanitation.[16]

Thus the Igbariam College was to help the teachers prepare for Government Teachers' Certificate (Teachers' Grade Three) to improve their efficiency. This would enable them to teach the top classes in the assisted mission schools.

Although the college began in 1913 with Father Thady O'Connor as the first principal, it was at first conceived by Shanahan in 1912 as a minor Seminary (petit Séminaire) with the hope of training future native priests.[17] The plan however was not a success, and Shanahan had to send two of the first students who had wanted to be priests to England to study. One of them, John Anyogu, became the first Igbo priest east of the Niger. He was ordained in December, 1930 at Onitsha.

St Anthony's College did not last long. Owing partly to the war situation which made the supply of personnel to staff it difficult and the growing apathy of the local people to Christianity,[18] it was shut down in 1918. But then it had trained a handful of efficient and dedicated Igbo teachers who became pioneer headmasters, teachers and catechists throughout Igboland and even beyond. Among those men whose names are still

recalled today with deep respect and pride by many people were P.H. Okolo, Paul Anaekwe, William Onuchukwu, Joseph Modebe, John Ejoh, J.O. Mathews, R.R. Olisa (now the King of Ossomala), J.C. Bosah, P.O. Uyanwa and J.A. Anazonwu.[19]

Not only did they remain steadfast in the Catholic faith and headed many famous Catholic schools, it was, perhaps, in their role as "teacher of teachers" that they excelled. As was said above, Igbariam College was closed down in 1918. There was no new Catholic teacher training institute until 1928 when St. Charles' Teacher Training College was opened at Onitsha. The old Igbariam College was instead transformed into a seminary in 1924 but this was again closed down three years later. Between the closure of that training college in 1918 and the opening of St. Charles in 1928 the work of training pupil-teachers was done largely by the products of St. Anthony's College Igbariam. Not only did those teachers open new schools or man existing ones in many parts of Igboland, they were assiduous in training pupil-teachers who would head the hundreds of 'bush' schools which existed or were opened in the hinterland in the twenties and early thirties. Almost each one of those Igbariam-trained teachers had a teaching career which ran like this:

> RCM (Roman Catholic Mission) school, Ihalumona – January to April 1919; RCM Owa-Imezi – May to September 1919; St Paul's Eke – October 1919 to September 1921; St Patrick's Emene – October 1921 to December 1922...[20]

Their frequent transfers to different towns had some advantages. It made many people benefit from their knowledge. As they went from place to place, they not only taught their regular classes and supervised other teachers during school hours, they also usually selected the brighter pupils (including untrained pupil-teachers) to whom they gave special tuition lessons outside school hours in order to prepare them as teacher-catechists for the smaller schools in the various mission outposts. Testifying to this practice of forming pupil-teachers by the Igbariam-trained teachers, W.J. Okonkwo – himself a pupil-teacher under Paul Anekwe – said:

> The headmaster, Mr P.O. Anekwe, was so able and hard-working that he helped us to teach and study strenuously so that I could sit and pass the first pupil-teachers' examination in December 1925. The system of education in those days was that after teaching and studying for four years a teacher was eligible to sit for the Third Class Certificate Examination, now called the Grade Two Teachers' Certificate. I was lucky to teach under the hardworking headmaster. He had to lecture us on important subjects for two hours after school every day...[21]

In mission centres with large Standard Six schools arrangement was sometimes made whereby unqualified bush-school teachers gathered at the central school shortly before the Standard Six examination. There the more qualified senior teachers would teach them special lessons to enable them sit for the examination. This was the practice, for instance, in Adazi – St Andrew's School.[22] Recalling what happened there, one of the teachers who prepared the bush-school teachers for the Standard Six examination said,

> Teachers who did not pass Standard Six were assembled in Adazi toward the time for Standard Six examination. They were kept for about two weeks and were given intensive teaching by some experienced and learned teachers. I was one of those recruited to teach them... It was a kind of crash programme. Some passed; some failed.[23]

The Fathers further supplemented the work of these "teachers of teachers" in many ways. One of these, and the commonest, was the practice of gathering the pupil-teachers and catechist-trainees at the central mission for monthly meetings and annual retreats. The monthly meetings, more often called "Monthly Returns", were first and foremost occasions for the teachers and catechists to render monthly account of monies they collected from their stations. They also gave oral and sometimes written accounts of the state of their stations – the school and the church. The priest incharge of the parish ~~would~~ advised them, where

necessary, on how to deal with different pastoral and school problems. Before leaving, the teachers and catechists collected their monthly salaries and materials required for running the church and the school. On arrival for the monthly meetings which were held on Friday and Saturday, they stayed in the mission premises where they were accommodated generally free of charge. Some stayed with friends living nearby. They however took care of their feeding. Departure was usually in the evening of Saturday to enable them organize Sunday service the next day at their various stations.

The annual retreat was usually a more elaborate occasion. It lasted between three and eight days. It was well planned, and involved both spiritual and social activities. The timetable varied from place to place but the following, taken from Anua mission,[24] was the common pattern:[25]

5.30 am	-	Rising
6.00 am	-	Morning Prayer, Holy Mass and Religious talk
8.00 am	-	Group rosary
9.00 am	-	Religious talk
10.00 am	-	Discussion (Talk on education given by the Headmaster of Anua School)
12.00	-	Lunch and recreation (football)
2.00 pm	-	Open air Assembly (a talk on missionary work and customs that should be retained or abolished, etc.)
4.00 pm	-	Football match

5.30 pm - Group rosary
6.00 pm - Religious talk
7.00 pm - Supper and recreation
8.30 pm - Night prayer

In Anua the retreat was for seven days. In addition to the above daily programme, Wednesday was set aside for confessions. The exercise began on Sunday evening and ended on Saturday morning with a Mass. The retreat was usually directed by a priest from a neighbouring mission. At one time as many as 114 head-catechists attended a retreat. They were charged a moderate fee for feeding and accommodation.

In Eke, another old mission centre,[26] the missionaries set up an Internat (special boarding institute) for training teacher-catechists.[27] Here, about forty best pupils chosen from the outstations, were housed and given special training on the catechism. The courses lasted till midday. This was followed by matins. In the evening they returned for the catechism classes. It is not clear how long they stayed but the practice might not have differed from that in Anua mission.

Although each priest organized the training of teachers and catechists the way he could, given the facilities available to him, there is evidence that with time some minimum standards were required of teachers so trained before they could be employed by the Church as catechists and teachers. For instance, a directive circulated by Bishop Shanahan to the Fathers in 1924 listed some of the conditions for

appointing or retaining catechist-teachers.[28] The directive in part reads:

> 1. They (catechist-teachers) should pass a yearly examination in religious instruction.
> Their salaries should be made to depend in part on the way they acquit themselves on their work.
> 2. Every year on the occasion of their Examination they should receive a short course on the method of imparting religious instruction as well as on the matter of this all-important subject...[29]

The above regulation was given at the end of the Provincial Chapter and Ecclesiastical Assembly held at Onitsha in August 1924 and presided over by Bishop Joseph Shanahan who was made bishop of the Vicariate of Southern Nigeria in 1920. It is not clear how far they were applied.

The Government and the Training of Teachers

Although the training of catechists along the above pastoral lines continued, it gained less prominence with time as the Church began to emphasize the training of teachers to teach in her numerous assisted schools. This was because of the colonial government's increasing intervention in the running of schools. The first major policy statement on education by the government was made in 1925 – "Memorandum on Education

Policy in British Tropical Africa." This was followed in 1926 by an education code.[30] The quality of teachers was a major concern of the government. On this the Memorandum stated:

> The Native Teaching Staff should be adequate in numbers, in qualifications, and in character, and should include women. The key to a sound system of education lies in the training of teachers, and this matter should receive primary consideration.[31]

Besides the general need to have more qualified teachers to staff her numerous schools, the Catholic Church had other reasons to embark on the training of more teachers at that time. She wanted to catch up with the Protestant Missions which had more training institutions. For example, by 1927, the five main Protestant Churches in Southern Nigeria had in all eight training colleges, whereas the Roman Catholic Church had only three, and none in the east.[32] It was partly to offset this imbalance that St. Charles' Training College for boys was opened in 1928, and Holy Rosary Training College for girls in 1935 – both in Onitsha.

The training of teachers continued to gain prominence in later years, especially after the Second World War. In a letter to school managers in 1948 the Catholic Education Secretary, Father Jordan, emphasized the urgency of training more qualified teachers especially to match the Protestants. Part of his letter reads,

> Perhaps, all Fathers do not realise that Catholics in Nigeria lagged very far behind the other Missions in teacher-training in the past, and that a constant supply of certificated teachers was one of the main causes of Protestant domination over Western Nigeria. They now literally control complete Provinces there, because nearly all the large schools are in their hands.[33]

Concluding the above circular he said,

> Quality will pay us far better dividends than mere numbers from now on. Quality can be achieved only through added numbers of trained teachers and close supervision.[34]

The figures below show the rate of progress made in the production of certificated (Higher Elementary) teachers within a decade in parts of Onitsha and Owerri Provinces.[35]

Year	Enugu Area	Onitsha Area	Owerri Area
1938	25	45	53
1942	31	50	68
1948	40	60	120

Effects of Teacher Training on Catechists' Work

One major effect of the pre-eminence given to the training of teachers (as against ordinary catechists) for the school system was that their teaching role gained more prominence over their purely catechetical and pastoral role. The professional school-teacher

gradually began to pay less attention to catechetical work. Some who taught catechism lessons did so with less devotion. This in turn made the Church authorities to begin to be more wary of those they recommended for training. Selection, when not based on a competitive examination and on an individual candidate's academic excellence, was determined by "recommendation" made by parish priests and school managers. They generally recommended those they "trusted" would return to help in teaching catechism in schools or help-out as catechists, in addition to their normal classroom work as teachers. Furthermore, the missionaries tried to discourage the inclusion in the curriculum of training colleges subjects which they thought made the student-teachers qualified and therefore more likely to join the government service or business firms on completion of their training rather than continue with the mission service. Also there was fear that such well-trained teachers might pursue higher education on completing their training as teachers. There was, therefore, some dilemma in the mind of missionaries about giving good education to their teachers. On the part of the teachers, the denial of opportunity for full education became a source of anguish and conflict with the Church authorities. A retired headmaster and veteran teacher described the new development thus:

> They discouraged people trying to leave the service. Take for example, they tried to make it difficult for teachers to pass higher examinations that would enable them to leave the teaching service. Before, in St Charles College certain subjects were taught — Mathematics, Elementary Science, Literature, etc. Now when the Irish missionaries felt that many teachers were able to pass their matriculation a few years after leaving the college, they tried to make this impossible... For example, in our Third Year, eight of us decided to do Maths as optional subjects in the Higher Elementary. Now, after First Term's holidays they decided to discontinue (the teaching of) Maths altogether...[36]

Indeed, many missionaries began to view the new training college as a mixed blessing for the Church. It produced welltrained teachers but it also produced teachers to whom service in government and business circles became a stronger attraction than in the mission. In this regard, a missionary is reported to have said, "St Charles College is the four walls where our enemies are trained."[37] It was partly to forestall the increasing exit of trained teachers from mission service that the system of Bond was introduced. By this a trained teacher was indebted to the mission to teach for a certain period of time after his training. The system of bonding teachers understandably met with considerable resistance from teachers. They saw it as undue restriction to their freedom. Indeed in some parishes teachers complained they could not go to where they liked on weekends without prior permission from their

parish priests. In Oguta Father Mellet insisted on this for his teachers wishing to travel at weekends.[38] Perhaps this is understandable, seeing that most teachers were also catechists, and were expected to conduct Sunday service at their stations, or assist the priest, where one was available. The practice of bond was later dropped from 1964 though it had earlier obtained government support.[39]

Rise of New Bodies to teach Christian Doctrine

With increased government control of schools and the standardization of the conditions of service for teachers both in state and mission schools following pressure from the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT),[40] the Catholic Church sought for new bodies or organisations to take care of the teaching of catechism. One of such newly-formed volunteer bodies was the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD). Another was the Legion of Mary. The CCD was founded in Owerri diocese in the fifties. Giving the background of the CCD the bishop of Owerri, Most Rev. Dr. Joseph B. Whelan said,

> Teachers have been bound by "Conditions of Service" to teach catechism outside school hours. Often their unwilling service was of little value and their teaching poor in quality. The development of the Confraternity will enable us to put the teaching of the Catechism on a voluntary basis.[41]

The CCD was made up of volunteer male and female teachers of catechism. Though some were professional teachers, a good number came from non-professional teachers and ordinary Christians. Some were zealous teenagers and members of other Church prayer groups like the Legion of Mary, the Mary League, etc. They organized catechism lessons for children and adult catechumens outside school hours both in the church and in specially selected places in the villages. Their work was supervised by priests and catechists. They were also guided by a manual.

The Catechist at Work

Notwithstanding what was said above about teachers and their growing apathy to their earlier role as catechists, a good number of them combined classroom teaching with work as mission catechists up to, and even after 1960, when Nigeria became independent. Their changing role as catechists when education became almost completely secularized will be examined elsewhere. Wherever they worked as catechists, they wielded much power and influence. Whereas the colonial government made use of various agents such as court clerks, court messengers, interpreters, chiefs and the native authority police, missionaries had virtually only the local teacher-catechist to work with. Such a catechist usually combined various functions together. The career

of one such devoted catechist will now be examined. He was Solomon Okaih of Adazi.[42]

Like many other catechists at the time, Solomon[43] had no special training for his work as catechist. His basic education was the Standard Six pass which he obtained in the primary school in his own town, Adazi. Indeed, he broke his schooling at first after passing Standard Five in 1919. He taught for a while, as was the practice with many pupils at the time. It was at the end of this brief teaching career that he read and passed Standard Six under the special care of P.H. Okolo – one of the pioneer teachers trained in St Anthony's College Igbariam.

After passing Standard Six (in 1924) he resumed teaching in Adazi but this time he combined it with helping out in the parish office. Due to this manifest interest in pastoral work, the priest incharge, Father Albert Bubendorf, appointed him full-time catechist in the parish – a parish which at its height had over 100 outstations and towns, the farthest of which was more than sixty miles away.[44] Solomon usually did not accompany the Fathers on bush treks but remained at the parish centre, working in the office. There were some teachers who did so with the Fathers. One of them was George Anisiobo from Abagana.[45] Solomon remained a catechist till his death in 1949. Describing his career as the parish catechist, Ebunilo noted:

Solomon Okaih

> In St Andrew's Mission itself, where Solomon lived most of his life apart from his childhood, he served as catechist, interpreter to the parish priests and any other European visitors to the mission; he served as organist, typist, accountant, bursar, adviser to the parish priest, peace-maker to contending Catholics, especially husband and wives.[46]

As accountant and bursar, Solomon had an enormous task to perform. He not only managed the mission account, he was also the paymaster of hundreds of teachers who taught in the numerous schools in the parish. These came to Adazi at the end of the month to render account of fees collected and to receive their salaries. In addition to handling mission finance, Solomon also kept money in safety for many people, especially his townspeople living outside the town. It was said that in the parish office he stored dozens of cigarette boxes in which he kept money for different individuals, with their names clearly labelled on them.[47] No one doubted his honesty and sincerity in rendering such accounts. Solomon carried out his official functions with great devotion and zeal. He also displayed remarkable sanctity which impressed all those who knew him or came in contact with him. One of his admirers, who was a pupil in Adazi school in the thirties, said

> Mr Okaih was very religious. He devoted much time to prayer and church work. You would find him in the church praying as early as

> 4.00 am, that is, hours before the church bell was rung.[48]

Another contemporary of his said,

> Solomon prayed so hard on his knees that they became as black as coal. Whenever he left the (parish) office, one would find him next in the church.[49]

A holy and exemplary life was as a matter of fact expected of the mission catechist and teacher. The guidelines on his work stated the following, among other qualities expected of the catechist:

> A catechist can not work successfully to the salvation of the souls of others, if he neglects his own sanctification. He must work constantly to progress in virtue.... The most important duty of a catechist is to work daily at his own perfection by prayer and the practice of the Christian virtues.[50]

Such a high standard of moral and religious life expected of the teacher and catechist was of course not peculiar to the Catholic Church. Other Christian Churches had similar regulations aimed at making the teacher a committed and dedicated evangelist. For instance, as late as 1953, the Lutheran Church of Nigeria had the following clauses in the conditions of service in her manual for teachers:

> Unless the General Manager gives permission to the contrary,
> (1) Teachers who are not in communion with

the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Nigeria shall not be employed in Lutheran School.

2 As a proof of their communicant membership within the Lutheran Church, teachers shall at all times have in their possession a Visitor's Communion Card duly signed by their pastor of their home congregation.

3 Nothing contrary to Lutheran teaching as laid down in God's Word and Luther's Catechism shall be taught in Lutheran Schools.

4 Teachers are required to undertake special duties in the Church according to their gifts and capabilities as assigned to them by their local Managers. Teachers are expected to be exemplary in attendance at Church services, in attendance at the Lord's Table, in stewardship.[51]

There is no doubt that the Church authorities were pleased with the work of Solomon Okaih. In a fitting tribute to him at his graveside on 16 July 1949 after his death Bishop Heerey said, "As a layman Solomon Okaih did the work of a priest."[52]

The Bush-School Teacher-Catechist

Catechists of the type of Solomon Okaih were not very many in the mission times. This was because there were few central missions. The church relied more on the services of numerous teacher-catechists who worked in remote villages and towns and who had only an occasional contact with the central mission where the priest usually resided. Their schools, called

'bush'-schools, were generally unassisted by the government. They usually did not reach the Standard Six Class, unlike the schools in the central missions. Their teachers were generally less qualified and sometimes were not more than one or two in a school. The life and career of one of such teachers will throw more light on their contribution to the growth of the church.

Sylvester Izualor lived the early part of his life as a bush-school teacher-catechist.[53] Born in 1917 at Igbariam in Aguleri Parish, Sylvester was employed as a pupil teacher in 1937, after passing the Standard Six class. He could not secure a teaching job at Igbariam, – his home town – because the school had dwindled in population of pupils. This was partly due to the closure of Igbariam parish by the church authorities some years before. Indeed, by 1933 Igbariam school dropped to Standard Three Class from its former Standard Six position. The closure of the parish was due to the uncooperative nature of the people, many of whose converts quickly reverted to paganism. Following their application for teaching in Aguleri Parish, Sylvester and three other teachers were sent by the parish priest, Father T.J. Roynane, to Ogoja. Sylvester did not stay long in Ogoja. According to him, the environment was unhealthy – plenty of sandflies and jiggers. Also there were many lepers. In his words, "The people did not seem to abhor leprosy. We barely stayed three months and returned."[54]

On his return that same year (1937), Sylvester was lucky to be posted nearer home. He was sent to open a new mission station and school at Eziagulu-Otu – about twenty kilometres northeast of Aguleri. Eziagulu-Otu is situated on difficult terrain. Meanwhile Reverend Father William Obelagu, just newly ordained, had become the parish priest of Aguleri. The central catechist was Martin Kwazu, a native of Aguleri. Sylvester was posted to Eziagulu-Otu as both teacher and catechist. In the town he had only sixteen boys, aged between fourteen and sixteen, as pioneer pupils. They were lured to school by the townspeople on promise to grant them all the traditional titles they would have aspired to and taken like their counterparts who refused to go to school. To increase the school population Sylvester tried to endear himself to the town-elders and notables. They included Morba Ikechukwu, Nwafor Ezeanya, Agacha Igwedibia and Anyanwu Mmelinwego. He often visited their homes and gave them tobacco as gifts. He talked to them on the value of education. They began to bring out more children for schooling. The number soon rose to thirty. With the increase in the school population and more goodwill from the people, Sylvester was able to get the people build him a grass hut. Hitherto he had lived with one Anyagbo – a non Christian. A school was also built with the same material.

Sylvester raised the school – named St Mary – from Class One to Three before leaving for another station, Ikpume. For the three years he lived at Eziagulu-Otu Sylvester remained the only teacher. He managed to teach the three classes in the school through a shift system. He taught the first class from about 7.30 am. The second class followed the first and ended at about noon. The third began at noon and ended at about 2.00 pm.

At Eziagulu-Otu he also formed the first local church committee. The members were picked from some of the pioneer converts whom he specially groomed. In the town Sylvester was not called catechist but simply 'teacher'. His salary was only twelve shillings and sixpence. This, according to him, was lower than what his counterparts in the central school in Aguleri earned. They were paid fifteen shillings and, sometimes, more. This disparity in wages created much ill-feeling among teachers, especially those in the bush schools. Strangely, attempt was made to justify it by saying that pupils in a central school gained more knowledge than their counterparts in a bush school. This would have been acceptable if the pupils in the central schools paid more fees than their counterparts in bush schools. There is no evidence this was so. Mission authorities seemed to have supported the disparity. According to Sylvester, it was Father Obennyer, a German priest, who first questioned it and called for equal payment of teachers

with the same qualification, no matter where they worked. Despite Father Obennyer's new directive, Sylvester's fortune did not change. He was not paid his "due" salary easily and regularly in the various bush schools where he worked. Payment in many cases came only after a long bargaining with the town-elders and local church committee.

The school fees of many pupils were similarly not easily paid. For instance, at Ukpaka, where Sylvester lived for one year, the parish priest distributed the school fees equally to the four quarters which made up the town. Because the quarters were unequal in number, those with larger number easily paid their quota of the fees while those with smaller number did not pay. So in the end all the fees could not be collected. Sylvester tried several methods to induce the people to pay the fees. He cancelled payment on quarter basis and instead insisted on individual basis. Every adult male was charged one penny in lieu of school fees. The reverse was the case. The smaller quarters paid up quickly but the larger ones withheld their money in protest. Sylvester described his next line of action thus:

> At this point I called a man named Awo – a notorious criminal in the town. He gave me the names of the leading persons in the big quarters. I got a full list. Then I went to one of them, named Maduadichie, who was standing election for the local council. I warned him that I would stop his chances of winning the

> election unless he got his people to pay their share of the school fees. I told him I held him responsible for their refusal to pay...[55]

Sylvester's threat worked successfully. Maduadichie was frightened. He quickly summoned his people and within a short time the fees were paid. Sylvester left the town after one year. He tendered his resignation to Father Obelagu, who had once more returned to Aguleri. Sylvester was dissatisfied with the meagre salary he received and the inability of the people to pay it as well as the school fees regularly. He recalled that one of his counterparts, by name Joseph Epundu of Onitsha, earned seventeen shillings and six-pence while he was paid only twelve shillings and six-pence at Ukpaka. He and three other teachers who suffered similar plight resigned at about the same time (1942) at Aguleri.[56]

Father Obelagu did not accept their resignation kindly. According to Sylvester,

> For a while Father stood dazed, looking steadily at us. Then he simply murtered 'Soldier go, soldier come!' Some people thought that was a curse on us.[57]

Sylvester went to Emeke (Emekuku) in Owerri district in search of another job. Emekuku was several miles away from his home. At Emekuku he was employed as a head-master on a salary of two pounds a month. Despite the higher salary and his position as headmaster,

Sylvester did not enjoy his new job. He was forced to resign three years after and returned home. Giving reasons for his action, he said,

> My teachers held secret meetings against me. People called us names – Ndi-Ugbo-butelu. So I decided to return home after three years. That was in 1945.[58]

Sylvester's next posting was to Umerum – a small but growing river town near Aguleri and with a flourishing trade on palm-oil, kernel, fish and rice. The local church there already had a church committee. The Christians were somewhat sophisticated and were hard bargainers. Sylvester encountered two major difficulties at Umerum. First, the people had objected to his transfer to their town because he was not married. Recalling what happened Sylvester said,

> On hearing about my posting, the people asked, "Is he married?". When they were told I wasn't, they sent word to Father Obelagu, telling him they wouldn't like an unmarried teacher. Father told them they either accepted me or do without a teacher. So they had no alternative...[59]

The second problem was about his salary. This was hotly debated since Sylvester wanted nothing less than what he earned at Emekuku. Father Obelagu was not happy Sylvester asked for higher wages. He however did not interfere with the bargaining between Sylvester and the people of Umerum. The people consulted themselves and offered him one pound five shillings.

He rejected it and taught for three months without pay. As the people refused to change, Sylvester was forced to accept the offer. He however asked to be transfered to Aguleri. This was done in 1948.

Sylvester's teaching career was probably not unique at the time. It shows what life was like to many a teacher in the outstations. Such a teacher battled against many odds. Chief among them was perhaps his salary. This was often the outcome of a long bargaining with the local community. This sometimes made a teacher's salary something of public knowledge, and that to the teacher's embarrassment. The amount agreed on was generally lower than what was paid to a teacher with similar qualification working in a central mission. Payment was slow and irregular. It was the responsibility of the local community, especially the local church council. Only in few cases did the priest help. He got the supplementary funds by deducting money from the salaries of teachers in the central mission. Father Cornelius Liddane of Adazi Mission, for instance, did this very often, and it partly accounted for his unpopularity among his teachers.[60]

Delay in the payment of a teacher's salary often forced the teacher to live on loans. He would borrow money from some generous persons in the local community. Here the case of a teacher - Dominic Ezeibe - may be cited. Dominic was a teacher at Ifite-Ogwari in Aguleri Parish. On one occasion he was owed for eight months. He lived on money borrowed

from friends. When finally he got his salary, he was said to have been left with only five shillings, after repaying his creditors![61]

The career of Sylvester Izualor and many teacher-catechists like him working in the out-stations shows the great diversity between the life of a central mission catechist and a bush-school teacher-catechist. Whereas the former enjoyed greater stability in work-place as well as higher wages, the latter often moved from place to place in search of better conditions of service. He received meagre wages and irregularly too. But there is no doubt that the church needed the services of the latter, perhaps, more than that of the former, at least in the early mission times when expansion, rather than consolidation seemed paramount.

The Church Committee

From the above sampled cases it is clear that the mission catechist – whether in the central mission or in the out-station – did not work in isolation. There were other groups he had to interact with. They included the church committee, the village elders, chiefs and priests.

Every mission had a church committee. The members were drawn from the local community – usually from the older members of the church who had leadership qualities and were deemed to be good Christians. Their

number was generally twelve – a number said to reflect the Twelve Apostles. In many places the catechist was an ex-officio member of the church committee. Much has been written about church committees and the power they wielded.[62] Their principal duty included taking care of the priest's maintenance, building churches and schools and maintaining them. They also helped to provide money for teachers' salaries. They saw to the execution of directives from the priest and the local catechist. They helped to maintain discipline among church members, and they also gathered children for the school. They served as the watch-dog to teachers, watching their moral life and devotion to duty. When a teacher was found wanting, the church committee would go to the Father and say, "We don't want this teacher any more." Such a teacher would be sacked or transfered.

In the matter of maintaining discipline among church members the church committees sometimes used force on erring members. They imposed fines or barred such members from further participation in church functions. In one area they sometimes met with stiff resistance. That was when they tried to prevent unmarried members from cohabiting with their wives. The common practice was for such girls to be sent to special marriage training centres.[63] There they received instruction on Christian marriage and mother-craft. Those not yet baptised were baptised. They would be allowed to leave the centre only when

Christian marriage had taken place or could be guaranteed. As one would expect, this confinement of women and girls in marriage centres sometimes led to open protests by their husbands who regarded such action as undue infringement on their right. Matters sometimes ended in court litigations. A case in point happened at Obunagu village in Inyi town of Awgu division. There some villages complained to the Resident, Onitsha Province, against the village Catholic church committee for "seizing" their wives. They said that though they were formerly members of the Catholic church in the village, they had long ceased to practice the faith and therefore regarded themselves as no longer bound by the church rules. Despite this, they said that the church committee forcibly took away their wives and confined them to the mission. Part of their protest letter reads:

> It happened this year to our greatest surprise the RCM Committee members with their school teacher as pioneer forcibly came to each and every individual of us (Sic) and took away our wives to RC Mission compound. The Committee members said that these our women should be detained under the protection of Mission for training as to qualify them to encounter us in a Christian marriage; behold we have left the church attendance for since about ten years ago. We are strongly against this Christian marriage.[64]

Apparently the villagers exaggerated the action of the church committee. The practice of confining wives of unmarried church members before marriage in

church was a common one at the time, and was generally acceptable to the members. The reply given by the District Officer in charge of Awgu division who investigated the allegation is quite revealing. In his letter to the Resident he doubted the charge of forceful detention of the women. He admitted the complainants' right to belong or not to belong to the church. Part of his letter reads:

> I have explained to the Church members that as the petitioners no longer wish to remain members, they cannot compel the wives to attend but there is no objection to them suing for fees owing.
>
> Petitioners say their wives were detained against their will but I can hardly believe that. The women are by no means young and look quite capable of taking care of themselves. They were certainly not in mission when I investigated the matter.[65]

The bone of contention of the villagers seems to be that they were no longer members of the Church, and therefore were not subject to the authority of the church committee. The church committee insisted on collecting fines from them for the period they were lapsed Christians. The villagers made another petition to the Resident, demanding the removal of the catechist (Daniel Ofor) and a school teacher involved in the matter.[66] The matter was finally resolved by discharging the protesting villagers from paying the fines imposed on them by the church committee. This episode illustrates to what extent some church committees could exert their authority on the members of their church, and also the extent to which people could defend their right.

Church Committee and Church Property

One of the remarkable functions of local church committees often overlooked was that of protecting church property, especially church land. Encroachment on church land was frequent, especially as the local church expanded or when individual donors wanted to reclaim land already donated to the church. The latter sometimes happened when the original donor died or defected from the church. The reasons were many and varied from place to place. Disputes, not amicably settled, were sometimes taken to the native courts. On such occasions the catechist or some notable member of the local church was sued. In such cases the local church through its committee would come to the defence of the church. An interesting case took place in Ogui, a village near Enugu.[67] There, chief Madu Nwagbo sued Joel Akosionu before the native court for trespassing on his land. Joel was a member of the local Anglican church. The trespass was because the church members of St Luke's Church Ogui had buried Samuel – Joel's son – on a piece of land Madu Nwagbo said belonged to him. In the suit Madu claimed five pounds for the trespass. The local native court ruled in favour of chief Madu Nwagbo and ordered Joel to pay him two pounds three shillings. Joel appealed at the Native Appeal Court. The Appeal Court upheld the judgment of the lower court. At this juncture both the local church committee and some

members of the church who described themselves as "The Sons of the Soil" petitioned the District Officer, Agbani, to reject the court's decision. In their own petition the church committee first of all claimed that the suit should not have been made against Joel but the church committee, since the land in question belonged to the church and not to Joel. The church committee's petition in part reads:

> In the first place we ask the court to change the summons to the name of the Church because Joel Akosionu did not know where his child was buried. That it was we, the church members of St Luke's Owui (sic) Native Town that took the body and buried in our special ground set apart as done in other towns.[68]

They said that five other deceased church members had in the past been buried there without objection from Madu Nwagbo. The petition was signed by seven church committee members.

In a similar petition the "Sons of the Soil" recalled that the land was part of the original piece of land the church acquired in 1921 from the local community in the presence of chief Alum Nwanneme to erect their church. In 1932 they got more land, part of which became their cemetery. This second transaction, according to them, took place before Madu Nwagbo himself. The boundaries were marked with pillars by the Reverend H. H. Daws. They argued taht since then they had been burying their dead in the cemetery without objection from anyone. Part of their petition reads,

> The burying of the Christians, both natives and foreigners since 1921 offered no question. The following were interred without permission: the son of Gabriel Agbo,... If permission would be obtained from Madu Nwagbo for to bury their dead(sic) in the church cemetery, Samuel Anni would have his children buried in their own village.[69]

In a brief comment on the petitions the District Officer ordered a retrial of the case. He doubted very much the sincerity of Madu Nwagbo. He minuted the following note on the matter:

> Case ordered to be reopened for proper evidence to be called. Every indication that the plaintiff is claiming land given to the church. I warn him that if it is shown this is so, he may have lain himself open to a prosecution since he claims he leased it recently to one Eze, an Owerri man.[70]

He ordered that the matter be brought up during his August visit to the town.

The Ogui Nike case was not an isolated one. In many towns church committee members and or the local catechist were frequently involved in land litigations in an effort to safeguard church or school land from encroachment. In Inyi Daniel Ofor was twice arraigned before the native court in lawsuits involving ownership of church land.[71] The first was in 1951 in a case between the RCM (Roman Catholic Church) and the

CMS (Church Missionary Society) in Inyi. The case was decided in the favour of the RCM. In 1956 a CMS member sued him again over the same land.

Marriage and Inheritance

Beside land litigations the church committee faced another thorny issue. This was defending the right of inheritance of Christian widows on the death of their husbands. The matter was complicated by the fact that inheritance under the Native Law and Custom differed very much from inheritance under the Marriage Ordinance. According to the former a widow who had no male issue could not inherit her late husband's property, including land. If she remarried, her dowry belonged to the family of her deceased husband. On the other hand, marriage under the Ordinance, which many Christians practised, gave such a widow right of inheritance. That there was no easy solution to this issue could be seen from a series of efforts made to reach a working agreement between the Christians and non-Christians. On 22 December 1939 representatives of both the RCM and CMS held a conference at Onitsha in the office of the CMS Secretary.[72] The meeting was held at the request of the Government which was anxious for a solution. At the end of the conference both Churches drew up a memorandum titled "Conflict of Marriage Ordinance

with Native Law and Custom."[73] Among the clauses agreed on were the following:

1 Where the deceased husband leaves a son of adult age, no difficulty arises in such cases.

2 (a) The person of the widow is not the property of any other person so long as she remains a widow.

(b) The widow is to be free with her children to carry out her and their Christian obligations.

3 Where a man dies leaving premises, the widow shall be entitled to remain and use the said premises, or part thereof, while she remains a widow.

4 In the case of a widow re-marrying, the dowry goes to the late husband's family.[74]

In the last case, that is where a widow remarried, the document made provision on what percentage of the dowry should belong to the family of the late husband. The original dowry was not to be returned in full – only half of it. A further reduction of 5% of original dowry was to be made for every year the widow had been married to the deceased husband. The document also made suggestions as to dowry of a daughter of the widow, and how to dispose of moveable property of the deceased husband. It concluded with the following exhortation:

(a) It is understood that regulations based on these suggestions are temporary

expedients to meet difficulties arising during a transitional period in the development of the Ibo (sic) people.

(b) All Christian couples marrying under the Ordinance should be advised at the time of their marriage to execute wills.

As would be expected, the reaction of the people to such an important matter as inheritance varied from place to place. In some places the problem was not yet acute and there was amicable settlement. Writing from Awgu to the Resident in Onitsha the District Officer said,

> I discussed this all important problem with a group meeting of the councils last month at which were present quite a large number of Christians...
>
> The problem has not as at present become acute in this Division. There was not for instance one member of this meeting who staunchly held out for the independent rights of the widow of a Christian marriage. There exists at present a desire for Christian marriage and native law and custom of inheritance to go hand in glove.[75]

He pointed out that, whereas the people conceded to a widow some rights over her late husband's property where she remained un-married, and moreso where she had to care for some children of her husband, they were unanimously adamant in granting her no property rights if she left the late husband's house.

In Onitsha the people rejected outright the RCM/CMS Memorandum. They were against any compromise or concession to the widow in the matter of inheritance.

For them the native law and custom should prevail and should not be mixed with the Ordinance. In a lengthy letter to the District Officer in Onitsha the King, Obi Okosi II, said:

> Unanimous opinion has now been reached by all the community of Onitsha, namely, that the suggestion put forward by the Missions are not acceptable to them. The Council is of the opinion that as much as dowry and native custom must be observed in every native marriage, native custom for the purposes of inheritance must also be observed in such cases. In other words, if a Christian who can contract any marriage in all English principles, (sic) there is no payment of dowry - it rests with the individuals to conform with the principles laid down by such ordinance.[76]

Onitsha people were not alone in the general rejection of the compromise sought by the Christian Missions in the matter of inheritance. Because of the problems involved the Resident in Onitsha had to warn the district officers not to force on the people the proposals made by the Missions. Writing to the district officers in Onitsha, Udi, Awgu, Nsukka and Awka he said,

> Replies show that it is not yet possible to adopt the compromise between the religious and social aspects of a Christian marriage, as suggested by the Conference of the two principal Missions...[77]

In the matter of dowry and inheritance it is

most likely that church committees met with strong opposition where they tried to uphold the rights of a Christian widow when such rights ran contrary to the native law and custom. There are no records of where they succeeded in going contrary to native law and custom. Besides, as seen above, colonial policy was against confrontation. This study however shows that the issue of marriage and inheritance was most likely another major problem that confronted the local church and her committee.

The Church Committee and the Priest

Church committee members performed many other functions in the local church. They liaised between the local church and other bodies in the locality and outside it. It was the missionary priest, who was more often than not a foreigner, that, perhaps, more than any other person appreciated the indispensable role of church committees. Writing about them Father Jordan said,

> Nigerian church committees were peculiarly Nigerian creations. They were attached to every church-school and formed the medium through which Fathers worked when they wanted things done in a way the natives understood... Without them there would have been no real link between the Father and the people.[78]

In maintaining this link with the priest the church committee however tried as much as possible to assert its independence, hold its meetings without the priest present and take decisions that were communicated to him afterwards for ratification only. This tendency to treat the priest as an 'outsider' was a common cause of conflict and misunderstanding between the church committee and the priest. For instance, at Nnewi matters reached a state of mistrust between the parish priest, Father Kettels, and the church committee that the church committee tried to evade the parish priest by requesting the bishop for a second priest in the parish. They based their request on the ground that the parish priest could no longer cope with the work in the parish which had grown very large, embracing twenty-five stations. In their letter they said,

> Nnewi Parish consists of twenty-five stations and in the stations the Christians increase by leaps and bounds that the work of looking after them is certainly above one priest to superintend. In spite of the fact that the Reverend Father is a strenous, zealous, hardworking man, the Parish suffers a lot of inconveniences by quick visit, quick confession, quick sick calls, inadequate listening to a complaint of the stations or individuals owing to unavoidable pressure on work.
>
> Therefore we earnestly appeal to your lordship for one more priest to assist the Reverend Father here in his tedious work.[79]

The letter was sent through the parish priest who

refused to countersign it, though he delivered it to the bishop. Father Kettles saw the request as uncalled for and unnecessary since he was capable of dealing with their problems. In a letter he wrote to all the church councillors he condemned the members' request for another priest; he also condemned their tendency to hide their meeting deliberations from him. Part of the lengthy letter reads,

> After a careful study of your log book of the years past and after a conscientious consideration of your work I come to the following conclusions:
>
> 1 The Parish priest as President of a Parish Council was not taken into confidence, was not informed about time and place of the meetings, was not allowed to see your books and cheque (Sic) your accounts...
>
> 2 The wording of your Minutes very often lacks due respect and when I remarked upon this fact the last time I saw your book, you wrote down "ridiculous. Thanks very much indeed"...
>
> My propositions for a future true and faithful and may God secure it (Sic), a successful Parish Council are as follows: Officers to be chosen, and agenda prepared, time and place for a meeting fixed... All resolutions to be submitted to a vote. The decision must lie with the Parish priest... I suspect your petition for a second priest to be not a straight forward one. If you intend to play one out against the other, you may find yourselves in a more awkward position as the one you are in now.[80]

Father Kettles dissolved the Parish Council shortly afterward. In a letter to Bishop Heerey he accused the members of not doing the Easter Duty (an obligation on

every baptized Catholic to go to confession and receive Holy Communion during the Easter season). He said they refused to inform him beforehand about their meetings, or let him see the minutes; finally, that they refused to show him the account books. His letter in part reads,

> I have asked for the books and the accounts. They not only kept silent but refused point blank to hand over for inspection and approval. I gave them 3 warnings and after a month dissolved them.[81]

Three years later Father Kettles was again attacked by some members of the parish who called themselves "Select Committee, Nnewi Parish." In a letter to Bishop Heerey the group accused Father Kettles of charging exorbitant AMC (Annual Missionary Collection – a form of church tax). It said Father Kettles raised the fees from two shillings, one shilling, and sixpence payable by every man, woman and child respectively to four shillings and three-pence, two shillings for every man and woman respectively.[82] The committee further protested against what it regarded as wrongful termination of a catechist. According to the committee the catechist was terminated because he asked for a salary increase. They told Bishop Heerey that

> (their catechist) who received a poor salary, demanded an increase in his salary for he was unable to maintain his family with that. Then instead

> of granting him the request (he) was expelled. Consequently we have no new catechist who is intelligent enough to carry on his duty in this our new parish.[83]

In another town, Nnobi, the protest against Father Kettels was a request by the whole Catholic community to leave the parish (Nnewi) and be joined to Onitsha. The people accused Father Kettles of working down the progress of their school. They said he tried to prevent it from reaching the Standard Six Class which was very much desired by every town with a new school. He was accused of transferring pupils from Nnobi school to the school in Nnewi to read the upper classes instead of letting them do so in Nnobi. In their lengthy letter to Bishop Heerey they said,

> Recently, on Corpus Christie (sic) day, the Manager delivered a sermon on Nobi (Nnobi) Catholic School and said that he was no longer interested in the affairs of the school. Most of the townspeople have been so disturbed by such a sermon. To say the least, they are now so disturbed in mind why the Manager thus for the third time within so short a period delights in shifting boys to Newi (Nnewi) though we have very many boys, a big school, and the distance is so great. As a result the townspeople are so fed up with the Management that they have asked us to request humbly that your Lordship withdraw our being placed under Newi Parish...
>
> We can not hide the fact, your Lordship, that there is increasing friction between Nobi and Newi, and Newi has been thwarting all plans meant for our progress.[84]

Such frictions and occasional mistrust were understandable, given the fact that priests were very few at the time and could not adequately supervise the work of the church committees. Some members of the church committee were not above board. On occasions such as baptisms or marriages of church members some church committee men were known to have demanded and taken bribe in order to present candidates.[85] They sometimes helped themselves with part of church funds which they used for procuring food and drink to entertain themselves. This practice of constant feasting earned the church committee men in Nnobi the name Ndi agba ka agu, which literally means "people with jaws like a tiger" – an obvious reference to the goats and other animals which they slaughtered on such feasting occasions.[86] At Uga, church committee men recommended candidates for teacher training courses and sometimes influenced the appointment of teachers and headmasters.[87]

The Church Committee and the Catechist

With the church committee on the one side wielding power in the local church, and the catechist on the other side, equally wielding power, there was bound to be occasional clashes and misunderstanding. The extent of such conflicts has unfortunately not been sufficiently studied. The common causes of conflict

are some of the following: different interpretations of the priest's directives, control of church fund and discipline of erring church members. Sometimes the church committee regarded the catechist as following a hard line or leaning too much on the priest who, to their mind was, as noted above, a stranger to their way of life. Could it not be the catechist who leaked information to the priest on matters he should not have been informed? A veteran church leader and one-time teacher-catechist once remarked on this matter of not revealing everything to the priest:

> Sometimes the church committee would regard the catechist as the priest's informant, and this would breed ill-feeling whenever they felt their secrets were revealed to the father. Therefore the church committee confided, or did not confide on the catechist, depending on the degree of understanding and trust existing between them.[88]

Again, because of insufficient knowledge of Christian doctrine and practice as compared to the catechist, church committee members sometimes disagreed with the catechist on what line of action to be followed in certain circumstances. For instance, in Dunukofia a case was reported of a sharp disagreement between the local catechist and the church committee. It was about the burial of a pregnant Christian woman who died. The question was, should she be buried without first removing her unborn child as demanded by the people's custom? To do so would incur the wrath of the gods.

The church committee was inclined to follow the local custom which meant removing the unborn child before burying the woman. The catechist refused and said that according to Father's instruction the baby could have been removed from her mother's womb before the mother died, but since that wasn't done, there was no reason to do so after her death, especially as it was certain the child was also dead. The woman was eventually buried as the catechist had directed but much to the displeasure of the church committee members and the non-Christian local people.[89]

The Catechist and other Church members

With the ordinary church members the catechist no doubt wielded much power and influence. He helped to prepare the catechumens for the reception of sacraments and selected those he considered fit to be presented to the Father for examination and admission into full church membership. The priest usually relied very much on the catechist's testimony about any member of the local church. He also recommended those to be suspended from the church or to receive other church favours like marriage and funeral. It was in the matter of the display of special knowledge of church doctrine that many a catechist perhaps, tended to be arrogant. Many of them were loath to admit ignorance. Their arrogance often became a subject of

ridicule by people who were well informed. Catechists generally manifested this arrogance while interpreting for the expatriate priest. As someone remarked,

> Many of them were loath to admit their limitation. They displayed this sometimes while interpreting for the Father. There atimes they would mask their ignorance of what the Father said by saying the Father was merely repeating himself![90]

The power and influence catechists wielded was manifested also in one important area – the creation of new stations, especially parishes. The siting of St. Anthony's Mission in Umudioka in 1940 is a case in point. The choice of Umudioka town, which is one of the five towns that make up Dunukofia clan, and which is by no means the most senior town, was said to have been masterminded by Anthony Uchendu, the catechist at Nnewi – the central mission embracing towns in the new parish to be created. Anthony was a native of Umudioka. The role he played in getting the Fathers to choose Umudioka has been summarized thus:

> He constantly drew the attention of the Nnewi Fathers on Umudioka as ideally situated, central and on the main Onitsha-Enugu road. He also informed the Umudioka people of the creation of a new parish from Nnewi Mission... and urged them to invite the Rev. Fathers to choose Umudioka as their residence.[91]

Umudioka won the contest and became the new parish centre in 1940. The Umudioka case is however not unique. The creation of new parishes often was master-minded by the influential teachers and catechists who were closer to the church authorities. In the same way they also influenced the transfer of a parish or its closure. For instance, in 1927 the Fathers decided to move the parish centre from Ozubulu to another town. The choice of Ihiala is believed by Ozubulu people to be very much the handiwork of the catechist in Ihiala. He was Joseph Modebe. Though a native of Onitsha, Joseph married from Ihiala and lived and worked there for a long time while Ozubulu remained the parish centre. Although the choice of Ihiala was due to such other factors as its centrality at the time and the meeting place for teachers each month, following the expansion of Ozubulu parish in the 1920s, Ozubulu people to this day believe Joseph greatly influenced the Fathers. As one of them puts it,

> Mr. Modebe was a full-time catechist and therefore he could wield so much influence... I am sure if Modebe wasn't at Ihiala, the idea wouldn't have come up to the Fathers.[92]

From the foregoing, it can be seen that the power catechists and teachers had was very considerable. No doubt some of them must have abused it by misdirecting the priest or by being overbearing with the people. But the number of such teachers and

catechists must have been small. Nor were missionaries unaware of such abuses. Bishop Shanahan once alluded to them in the following words:

> I have not spoken of imperfections, misfits. You know that they exist and will always exist. But the proportion is indeed slight compared with the real successes achieved.[93]

Indeed, when the balance sheet is made, many a teacher and catechist would score high on the side of conservatism and towing the line of the priest rather than of liberalism and speaking for the people. They tended to uphold Catholic doctrine rather tenaciously. They have sometimes been accused of cultural iconoclasm by spearheading attacks on the local culture and customs wherever they felt they were against Christianity. In the words of Ekechi,

> Most of them, half-educated and, in many cases, utterly misguided, contributed significantly to the open disrespect for, and disregard of, the society's time-honoured customs and practices. From the village church pulpit they thundered and decried social institutions; they counselled under pain of excommunication against participation in many community organization and activities. In their view, such participation was heathenish.[94]

Such reaction is, however, understandable, given their leadership position. Their sincerity generally cannot be questioned. Unlike the native clerks of the colonial era who were said to have exploited abundantly opportunities they had to oppress and rob their fellow Africans,[95] the catechists and teachers in general behaved creditably well and in many places left a good image behind.

CHAPTER THREE

OLD ADAZI MISSION AND AWKA DISTRICT CATHOLIC UNION

The first organised focus of Catholic lay opinion, initiative and activity in the Onitsha Province and, possibly in the former Eastern Region of Nigeria, was the Awka District Catholic Union.[1] The organisation arose under circumstances very closely connected with the development of Adazi as the second major Catholic mission centre after Nteje. The choice of Adazi town as a mission centre came with the decision of the Catholic missionaries to leave Nimo in 1918 where they had temporarily pitched their camp on abandoning Nteje. This decision has been attributed to a number of reasons. Although the Fathers reached Nimo first before Adazi, they did not, as what was said in chapter one above, get an enthusiastic welcome from the powerful reigning chief, Giniwefolu Onyiuke. Although his son, Michael, later became an ardent supporter of the church, by 1918 Adazi (sometimes called Adazi-Nnukwu) had become an attractive alternative for a new mission centre. Chief Ojiako Ezenne, the reigning chief at Adazi at the time, was partly instrumental to this choice.[2] Besides, geographically Adazi was more central and more easily accessible than Nimo, especially following the rapid expansion of the church in later years.

Dynamic Church Leaders

Besides the factors mentioned above, the growth of Adazi church was sustained by other forces. Adazi church had many dynamic leaders, especially priests and lay people. First among the clergy was Reverend Father Albert Bubendorf. Those who knew him in person, or who worked with him, speak glowingly of his personal charm and magnetism, his kindness, apostolic zeal and unshakeable faith in his work. Describing him Ebunilo said,

> Father Bubendorf...was a man of tremendous energy and wonderful organizing and religious acumen. He was ... fatherly, genial, extremely approachable, a true shepherd with dauntless spirit and unflinching faith. Endowed with natural charisma, he had untiring zeal to cope with the enormous and difficult task that stemmed from the multifarious body of new converts emerging from his seemingly amorphous stations.[3]

Though his parish was very large, and means of communications still poor at the time, Father Bubendorf made extraordinary efforts to reach almost all parts of it. He was prompt in answering almost all the innumerable requests made to him by the people for one thing or another:

> The chief or the town sent representative to Nteje or Adazi, and Fr. Bubendorf gave a date on which he was to be fetched. There is no story of a group he disappointed, even on account of unforeseen circumstances.[4]

He cultivated friendship with the chiefs of various towns. Where chiefs proved an obstacle to the Christians, Father Bubendorf would use his acquaintance with some district officers and court officials to intimidate the chiefs. A case was at Achina – a town about 16 kilometres southeast of Adazi.[5] Here, one of the warrant chiefs, Chief Ogbuozobe, was very antagonistic to the Catholics in the town. He had earlier invited the CMS to the town and became their patron. He was opposed to the Catholic Church which came in later, through the help of a rival chief, Nwosu Mbike of Umueleke village, Achina. To punish the Catholics, Chief Ogbuozobe began to summon them on public works, sometimes on Sundays. The Catholics protested, especially as they saw that their Protestant counterparts were not subjected to the same treatment. Many of the Catholics refused to go to work when ordered by the chief. Chief Ogbuozobe reacted by arresting about twenty of their leaders and locking them up at Isuofia prison. The matter was reported to Father Bubendorf by the Catholics through their catechist-teacher, Daniel Ikpechukwu Madike of Umudioka. Father Bubendorf immediately threatened the chief with court action. The chief released those locked up and thenceforth did not maltreat the Catholics.

To commemorate Father Bubendorf's great work in Adazi Mission the people of Adazi built a secondary school in his name. It is called Bubendorf Memorial

Grammar School. Father Bubendorf's great work in Adazi was carried on and shared by many other missionaries who worked in Adazi. But the priest who perhaps made the greatest impact in Adazi, after Father Bubendorf, was his immediate successor, Father Cornelius Liddane – an Irish priest,[6] and one-time captain in the British army. He succeeded Bubendorf in 1930, and directed the affairs of the parish till 1954, when he was transferred to Dunukofia Parish. Perhaps no words describe him better than these:

> A decisive and firm character, Fr.Liddane became famous for his great love and doggedness in the furtherance of education. For he rectified and improved on Fr. Bubendorf's school system. ... Fr. Liddane was a good fighter who got whatever he went out for, thanks to his tact and ability to win and persuade people.[7]

A study of Father Liddane is important not only because of his remarkable achievements and his temperament and style of work (in contrast to Father Bubendorf), but because he was directly connected with the events that gave rise to the formation of Awka District Catholic Union in 1947, which will be treated later in this chapter. Most writers on Father Liddane stressed his doggedness and determination to win, which made him rather overbearing, and which also inevitably won for him friends and foes alike. Writing about him Ebunilo said:

> A difficult man, fearless and indomitable, he was able to break the frontiers of both man and the devil to establish and consolidate the Catholic religion any where he wanted.[8]

Ironically his success in establishing schools was partly responsible for his 'unpopularity' in certain quarters. In those early days towns were often not in agreement as to the site of a new school, especially a central school. Father Liddane would often take a decision which he considered best, not minding whether it was the opinion of the majority. Thus commenting on this aspect of Liddane's educational policy, Francis Onyeneke said,

> Father Liddane was said to be unpopular, but he wasn't. He was, however, dictatorial, and would countenance no opposition to his plans and decisions... No discussion. For instance, in choosing the site for a Central School in Ekwulobia area, my people wanted it to be built near the present church at Ekwulobia but he refused, and preferred having it at the border with Isuofia. So it was built there to enable other towns to benefit from it. Whoever opposed him was regarded as enemy.[9]

Father Liddane probably got his greatest opposition from the people of Adazi town itself. The reasons were ~~are~~ not very clear but were probably not unconnected with his style of leadership which was so different from that of his predecessor, Bubendorf. The people believed that he did not like them but preferred Agulu (an adjacent town) with whom they had land disputes now and again. They also felt that despite Adazi being the headquarters of the parish, it did not enjoy favours commensurate with its status. Adazi people's protest against Liddane reached a climax in 1945 when on 28 December, a group which called itself "Christians of

St. Andrew's Adazi" wrote a letter with 968 signatories to Archbishop Heerey, requesting the immediate transfer of Father Liddane. Part of the letter read,

> May it please your Lordship to hear that the actions of the Rev. Manager, Father Liddane has become too scandalous (sic).
>
> We humbly and urgently want a new manager for Adazi and the removal of the Rev. Father Liddane from Adazi entirely, which if neglected may give rise to some immediate unforeseen crisis and reformations (sic).
>
> We just inform you of this without any prejudice as we have born (sic) the old man's scandalous managership for 16 years, and now it has reached its climax and saturation point.[10]

The letter most probably grossly exaggerated the situation. Some of the signatories were also probably fictitious as there are no further records of the protest. Besides, Fr. Liddane was not removed from the parish as a result of the protest letter. Furthermore, Liddane was in the good books of the church authorities and his great work in expanding the frontiers of the Catholic Church and schools was still sung many years after he had left Adazi. For instance, in a confidential report following his visitation of Adazi Parish in May 1958, Father Carron, the Provincial Superior of the Holy Ghost Fathers in Eastern Nigeria, wrote:

> Adazi is one of the strongest Catholic centres in the Archdiocese of Onitsha. In the old days, when Fr. C. Liddane was in charge, he fought hard against the CMS, with the result that they have little influence in the affairs of Adazi.[11]

Adazi people's hostility to Father Liddane would seem to lie on the charge that he abandoned Adazi — his base — to develop other towns. Besides, Adazi people did not hide their love for and preference to Father Bubendorf. As Elias Ebunilo put it,

> Our people loved Father Bubendorf very much and were opposed to his leaving. This made Father Liddane feel unwanted. ... This was the root of the misunderstanding with our people.[12]

Among the lay men and women who helped the growth of Adazi Mission were Solomon Okaih and his wife, Veronica. Their contributions are examined elsewhere.[13] Others included Patrick Herbert Okolo, Daniel Adike, William Onuchukwu, Isaac Nwosu, Joseph Afubera and Alfred Ikeme. These men were great teachers and headmasters who taught in and headed St. Andrew's Primary School Adazi at various times in the twenties and thirties.

At the height of its growth Adazi Parish comprised about 107 stations made up of many towns and villages. They included all the towns in Awka Division, one town (Oraukwu) in Onitsha Division; about twenty-one in Orlu Division and eighteen in Okigwe Division. Adazi thus became one of the largest Catholic missions in the Vicariate of Southern Nigeria.[14] St. Andrew's School was one of the forces which helped to link these towns and villages together within Adazi Parish. The school, built by Father Bubendorf, was soon raised to the

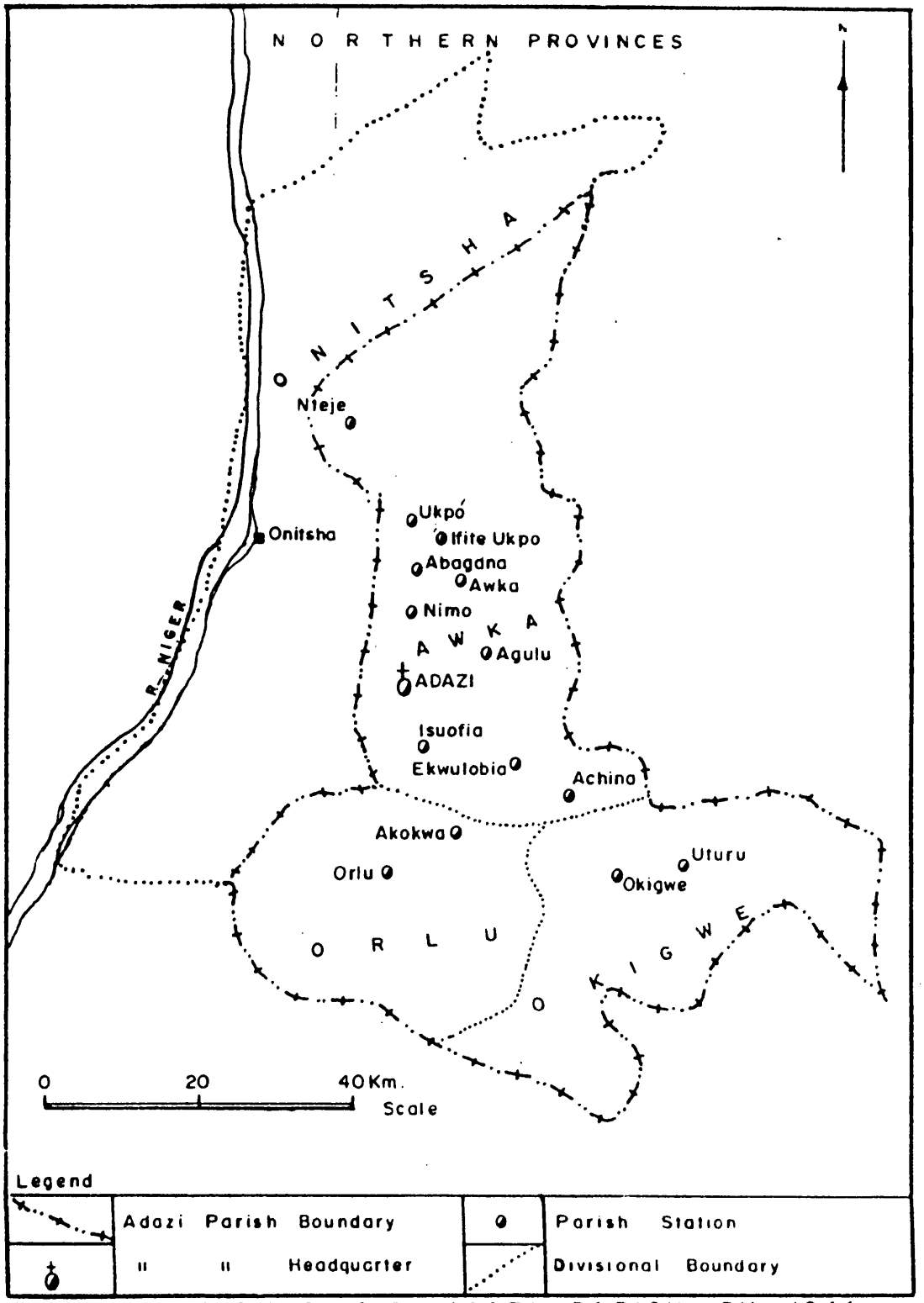

Fig.3 : MAP SHOWING OLD ADAZI PARISH BY 1944

status of 'assisted school' with a Government-approved Standard Six Class, due largely to the effort of Patrick Herbert Okolo – a veteran, indomitable and versatile headmaster from Onitsha.[15] Okolo came to Adazi in 1923. It is said that the first set of Standard Six pupils under him scored a 100% in the Government examination. He was nicknamed 'P.H. Made-Easy' by his pupils and admirers because of his versatility in almost all branches of knowledge taught in school. Testifying to his unusual administrative ability both as a headmaster and Catholic lay leader for many years, Father John P. Jordan, the Adviser on Catholic Schools in Eastern Nigeria at the time, remarked on 26 January 1959 at the news of his death:

> For fully a quarter of a century he literally dominated local Christianity in Aguleri, Adazi and Onitsha. ... His impact on the teaching body was unequalled. When Mr. Okolo went to a school, every headmaster knew he was meeting a councillor and friend as well as a man holding authority, and insisted on having it respected. Every teacher looked up to him, and accepted his decisions without demur. The Managers, too, held him in the highest regard.[16]

P.H. Okolo and his other great contemporary school-masters made St. Andrew's School great and attractive to pupils all over Adazi Parish. It was considered a great privilege for one to be admitted to it. Pupils usually came there to read the upper classes (Standards Four to Six). Some, especially those who came from towns far away, lived in the boarding house

Patrick Herbert Okolo

attached to the school. Giving reasons for the high academic standard in St. Andrew's School in the thirties and forties, a former pupil of the school, who was also a boarder said:

> Adazi school-life was like a college life. ... In Standard Six you were not taught by only one teacher. You had about four teachers teaching various subjects... Mr. Dan Adike taught English Grammar and Composition. Peter Michael Meze taught Maths; Rev. Fr. Smith taught English Language. Peter Ezeani taught Hygiene and Nature Study. ... This is why the Standard Six boys passed very well in public school exams.[17]

With the arrival of the Holy Rosary Missionary Sisters at Adazi in 1938, a Convent Girls' School and a hospital were also opened there. These were followed in the forties with the establishment of a Women's Teacher Training College (Loretto Training College). All these institutions enhanced the importance of Adazi Mission throughout the area. They gathered people closer to the Mission and its personnel. Compared with other mission centres in the Onitsha Province, Adazi Mission experienced remarkable growth as can be seen from the figures on the next page recorded in 1944.[18]

Birth of Awka District Catholic Union

If Adazi people's protest letter in 1945 demanding the ejection of Father Liddane from their town was dismissed as a local affair which did not win much

TABLE 4: ONITSHA PROVINCE: SACRED RETURNS – JULY 1944 to JUNE 1945

Parishes	Onitsha & C.K.C.	Aguleri	Ihiala	Adazi	Eke	Nnewi	Enugu & C.I.C.	Nsukka	Maku	Dunukofia	Udi	Total
Fathers	8	1	3	4	2	1	5	3	2	1	1	31
Sisters	6	-	7	6	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	25
Catholics	9,880	6,797	12,224	16,894	6,510	9,986	7,933	6,803	5,192	6,284	3,115	91,618
Catechumens	4,131	3,146	6,882	15,165	4,808	5,079	2,529	5,231	3,401	3,271	2,795	55,438
Xtian Fam.	758	393	1,104	2,593	1,022	1,714	976	901	694	821	504	11,480
Boys School	16	44	40	63	38	26	20	47	37	18	33	382
Boys on Roll	3,654	3,272	6,882	11,551	3,690	2,735	4,032	3,617	2,271	1,912	2,433	46,079
Girls on Roll	130	212	561	1,830	381	622	320	282	237	121	279	4,975
Girls School	2	1	1	2	-	1	2	1	-	1	-	11
Girls on Roll	1,395	37	310	434	-	150	1,192	151	-	228	-	3,897
Teachers (M)	144	107	251	340	123	106	119	112	97	74	92	1,565
Teachers (F)	39	16	12	17	-	14	41	6	-	8	1	154
Marriages	53	58	139	241	116	119	85	106	51	29	31	1,028
Pious Assoc.	5	2	2	19	2	16	4	2	11	2	-	65
Hosp./Clinic	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	-	1		11

support outside Adazi, there is no doubt that it was, to some extent, a reflection of the revolt by a small but growing number of people in different parts of the country, especially since the Second World War. This class of people was critical of any form of authoritarianism or dictatorship by the whites — whether in church or government circle. These critics generally seized any opportunity, whether real or imaginary, to attack those in authority and ridicule them in public. It is in the light of this that the next story, again connected with Father Liddane and Adazi, should be seen. It was this story that directly led to the formation of the Awka District Catholic Union in 1947. That year an Onitsha-based newspaper, the Spokesman, carried an editorial titled "Our Problem." The commentary was on a rumour involving Liddane. He was alleged to have embezzled £75,000 from Adazi parish. The editorial said:

> A Rev. Father was alleged to have embezzled a sum of £75,000. The Reverend Father wanted to carry this money home for his personal use, they say. Yet Rev. Fathers are not paid. How did he manage?[19]

It concluded by promising to further investigate the matter. The publication of the rumour, especially the innuendo given to it by the editor, gave what would probably have been dismissed as merely a local rumour, started perhaps by some disgruntled person in or around Adazi, undue importance and a wider dimension.[20] Catholics in Adazi parish were embarassed and embittered.

They rallied together in Adazi and held a series of meetings. The members at first called themselves "Catholic Committees of Adazi Parish." In their first letter to Bishop Heerey they spelt out their problems, aims and objectives. Part of the long letter dwelt on the alleged embezzlement on £75,000 by Father Liddane of Adazi Parish. It also mentioned the proposal to form a union. It reads:

> Since these three months, the enemies of the Catholic Church have turned up against her with fantastic sum of £75,000 as an instrument. When this rumour was spreading, we were silent with fear (sic), and all the God-fearing Christians among us tried to say all they could to contradict the lies. But we were aggravated the more when we read of another issue in Spokesman where the writer claimed to have been from Adazi Parish. We have met here four times, considering the best step to take in order to find out this our man.... We also propose to start a meeting — "Adazi Parish Catholic Union" ....
> We think that by being united like that we can be better prepared to fight the anticipated foes in the future.[21]

It was this small association, drawn at first from church committees from various towns and stations in Adazi Parish, that gave rise to Awka District Catholic Union (ADCU). The association had earlier written a protest letter to the Spokesman, condemning the publication on Father Liddane and denying any embezzlement of the parish funds. The letter in part reads:

> That problem of £75,000, which has created a great amount of unrest among the Catholic Christians everywhere in this country, and which has thrown a handful of pepper into our eyes, is really whimsical. When that rumour was circulating, we were silent but not foolishly.
>
> Even a millionaire who sustains the loss of such a huge sum must surely see, or at least, feel its vacuum. We, the members in this parish, ... have not noticed any conspicuous financial shortage... We honestly and positively ask you to use but the harmless verbal boots to convince the already biased public that Adazi Parish suffered no loss of money.[22]

More attacks on the Catholic Church, especially the clergy and the religious, showed that the Adazi case was not an isolated one. On July 2, 1947 the Spokesman, in an editorial congratulating the Roman Catholic Church for abolishing for teachers the compulsory payment of the Annual Missionary Collection (a kind of church tax), justified its criticism of the Church when it becomes, what it called 'un-African' and oppressive. It argued that

> To accuse us of being anti any religious organisation is as highly libellous as it is grossly fallacious. Rather we are anti-autocratic priests, anti-uncultured 'great I am' priest, ... anti-everything African priest.... We love the Roman Catholic Church as we love the Protestant Church and the African Church. If any of these churches misbehaves, it is our duty to call its attention to it.

Some Nigerian nationalists joined in the attack on the Christian Churches. One of such nationalists was Mbonu Ojike. He wrote a regular column in a

national newspaper – The West African Pilot, founded by the great Nigerian nationalist, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. Mbonu Ojike's column, titled characteristically, 'Week-End Catechism', often carried attacks on the Christian Churches, especially the Roman Catholic Church. In one of the publications he alleged that some Reverend Fathers and Reverend Sisters ran away from their "reverend abodes when it was certain to the public that some reverend children were about to be born."[23] The attacks were born largely out of a feeling by the nationalists that the Christian Churches were not supporting their cause sufficiently and were, in some cases, going against it. Such sentiments were summarized in a related editorial in The West African Piolt entitled 'Let the Church Arise'. Part of it reads,

> Not Rome, but Nigeria burns, and it burns fast from arson which the leaders of our people have committed. Yet the Christian Church, the spearhead of the urge for peace and concord stands aloof, demanding fees from the persecuted masses, singing Hallelujah, crying Lord, Lord, when those whom Christ placed in their charge are in tears ..... This is the hour when those who lead us spiritually should have come up and saved the nation.... If the church stands aloof when our country is in danger, how can it, when peace comes, as it must, remain and enjoy the labour it has not done? Let the Church of Christ arise.[24]

The Catholic laity did not see the attack on the Church, especially her clergy and religious, from the light of the nationalists. To them it was a calculated attempt to ridicule the Church's leaders and disrupt their

work. Thus, in a six-point resolution at the end of a mass meeting held at Onitsha on 13 October 1948, the Catholic Community in Onitsha condemned Mbonu Ojike for what it called his attempt through his Week-End Catechism "to corrupt and scandalize our youth through propagating ridiculous lies, false and heretical doctrine opposed to orthodox dogma and theology." To the laity it was nothing but "Satanism". The laity warned that "attacks on our clergy is ipso facto attack on the whole Christian structure."[25]

Despite the above resolutions, the Onitsha Catholic Community did not seem to have taken further action or formed a permanent association of lay Catholics. Some individual Catholics had earlier on called for the formation of a permanent union of Catholics in every parish. One of them, writing in a Catholic newspaper, The Nigerian Catholic Herald, called for the mobilisation of all Catholics. He said:

> With the forces of hell gathering and diplomatically undermining the Church, I think time is overdue when ardent Catholics should mobilise. Indifference cannot pay.... Obviously the present situation offers Catholics no better solution than that of positive action. I humbly suggest that a union of ardent Catholics be formed in each parish. Such parochial unions will eventually be the Nigerian-wide Union of ardent Catholics.[26]

Another Catholic lay man called for an outright formation of a Catholic political party.[27] While these isolated appeals for a united Catholic front were being

made on the pages of the newspapers, the Awka District Catholic Union was gradually growing, unknown to many Catholics outside Adazi Parish.[28] Its first task was to tackle the rumour on Father Liddane. The union quickly dispelled the rumour. Thereafter the union gradually sought for ways and means of formalizing itself – having obtained the goodwill and support of the acting parish priest – Father J. Hourigan, and the Bishop.

The union drew up a constitution entitled 'The Awka District Catholic Union Rules and Regulations.' It included the following as its main objectives:

(a) To advance Catholic interests;
(b) To promote the moral, social and intellectual improvement of the Catholics;
(c) To foster a true Catholic spirit;
(d) To encourage the study of Catholic history, doctrine and science;
(e) By frequent and regular intercourse to bind the members more closely in pursuit of the interest of the Church;
(f) To serve as an organ by which to safeguard the interests of the Catholics of the district as a whole.[29]

Towns within Awka Division were graded into four- A,B,C, and D according to their relative Catholic population and strength. They were also assessed annually according to the grading above. By June 1948 the towns, their grades and annual levy were thus:[30]

Grade	No. of Towns	Annual Levy
A	13	10s. 0d
B	10	7s. 6d
C	10	5s. 0d
D	14	2s. 6d

To further facilitate its work, especially following the creation of new parishes from the Adazi Parish, the union divided Awka Division into four zones — Adazi, Achina, Akpu (called Ufesiodo till 1958) and Awka.

Besides the general meeting which the union held usually once a year on a rotational basis in different towns, and the zonal meetings which were held four times a year (also on a rotational basis as at the general meetings), there was the executive meeting, which was the hub of the union and which took place always in Adazi. The choice of Adazi was largely due to historical reasons — Adazi being the birthplace of the other parishes and the union.

ADCU: Its Activities and Significance

From its rather dramatic beginning in the late forties, the Awka District Catholic Union (ADCU) became the main unifying body for towns and Catholics within the old Awka Division of the Onitsha Province for more than twenty-three years.[31] Prior to its formation there was no Catholic laity movement which involved so many Catholics over a wide area. Indeed, by 1959 seventy-seven

out of the eighty-two towns in Awka Division were members of the union.[32]

The union was initiated and completely piloted by lay Catholics who were very powerful and active. Some of them did not have much formal education. For instance, the union's first president, Martin Nwosu of Igbo-Ukwu, was not literate.[33] He was, however, very intelligent and eloquent. He was at first a businessman and later became a member of Aguata Customary court of Appeal. The court came into being in 1945 with the introduction of the 'Bestman' system of Native Administration.[34] The court had seven members. Martin at the time, was the only Catholic member, whereas five were Protestants. The Catholics protested against this, arguing that they outnumbered the Protestants in the area. In his reply to the protest letter which Father Liddane wrote on behalf of the Catholics, the Resident of Onitsha Province pointed out that membership was not based on one's religion but ability. He asked:

> What does it matter what's a man's faith — so long as he is intelligent, able and honest — and so long as he does his job not only to the best of his ability but also in a way better than his fellows could manage?[35]

Martin's appointment to the post of bestman testifies to his ability and leadership qualities. In his town, Igbo-Ukwu, he was for a long time the chairman of the church committee. Speaking about Martin a contemporary remarked, "In his town one needed him for everything.

Many a time Father Liddane would invite him to seek his opinion on vital issues."[36]

The first secretary of the ADCU was a teacher and, later, headmaster of schools for many years. He was Romanus Ebebe of Agulu town. Romanus received an honorary teachers' certificate. Since almost every teacher and headmaster of schools in Adazi Parish was expected to be a member of ADCU, the union did not lack able and literate officers.[37] Through its organisational structure outlined above the union was able to enlighten as many Catholics as possible on matters affecting Catholics and, thus, as much as possible engendered a united front by Catholics on many issues affecting them. Some of these will be examined below. Before doing so, it is perhaps important to note that, although the ADCU, unlike similar growing mass mobilization movements in the purely political arena at the time, did not openly challenge the clergy, some of its activities can be seen as indirect indictment on church leaders who were mainly white. For example, its attempts to standardize and improve the conditions of service of catechumen-class teachers, which is treated below, should be seen as a form of protest against the inhuman conditions of some church workers. Nationalists similarly launched violent attacks against poor conditions of work for workers in the country in the pre-independence years.[38]

The first focus of the ADCU was naturally on pure church matters – to help Catholics freely practise

their religion. Thus, as early as 1948, the ADCU took up the case of nine Catholics in Isuofia who were ostracized by a section of the local community for refusing to take an oath according to pagan way. It supported their stand and "advised them to band themselves together and remain as good Christians, not minding the pagans."[39] The Isuofia case was later referred to the District Officer (D.O.) at Awka, who decided the matter in favour of the Catholics. Referring to the matter at its meeting in Adazi later, the ADCU said, "Isuofia case was reported as favourable on the Catholics. The D.O. Awka dismissed the case, refusing the idea of forcing Catholics to swear."[40]

The case of salaries of catechumen-class teachers also came before the ADCU. These were teachers (usually untrained) who were employed by the parish priest or the local church committee to teach children, generally of pre-school age, and in schools commonly called Ulo Akwukwo Nta-Akara.[41] For a long time this group of teachers was subjected to poor and uneven salaries, which were in many cases paid at irregular times. The ADCU sought to regularize their wages and ensure prompt payment. It sent memoranda to parish school managers in Adazi, Awka and Achina, and also held meetings with some of them on the issue. At its 12th Meeting held at Adazi on 22 October 1950, the Executive Committee set up a board made up of three delegates from each of the following branches – Adazi, Achina and Awka – to fix the

salaries of such teachers. Later the ADCU Executive Committee urged parish school managers to contribute 50% of the money for the payment of catechumen-class teachers' salaries.[42] Despite the ADCU's intervention, the question of standardizing the wages of such teachers was not fully resolved. The ADCU, however, created an awareness of their plight. At the end of its efforts on their behalf, it was content with adopting the following recommendation, at least as a temporary measure: "that each town can have as many catechumen teachers as the town is able to pay for, while minimum salary be fifteen shillings till such a time we hear from the Rev. Managers."[43]

Other school and church affairs on which the ADCU deliberated included the appointment of school headmasters, catechists and catechumen-class teachers. It recommended that their accommodation be in mission premises instead of private houses, as in some cases.[44]

The boldest school project attempted by the ADCU was the building of a secondary technical school in Umunze. The plan was first mooted in 1951,[45] and member-towns were levied according to their grades. Thus A - £20 , B - £15 , C - £10 , D - £5 .[46] Owing to lack of funds as well as the outbreak of the Civil War, the project was abandoned. At the end of the war it was impraticable to revive it owing to the take-over of all schools by the Government.

To help popularize itself and to provide entertainment opportunities for the towns, the ADCU set up a Sports Committee in September 1962, which organized school sports among the towns and zones.[47]

Conflicts between Catholics (especially where they were in the minority) and Protestants were among the major pre-occupations of the ADCU. One of the most notable cases was the Amanuke case.[48] Amanuke is a town near Awka. There was no Catholic presence in Amanuke until 1958. The CMS were long established there and it was believed they were instrumental in preventing other Christian Churches from establishing there. Indeed, the people of Amanuke are believed to have bound themselves on oath not to allow any other church in their town.

The story of the establishment of the Catholic Church at Amanuke began with the conversion of John Anyafulu of Amanuke to the Catholic faith, following his recovery from a serious illness in 1958. John had become a CMS member in 1920, and remained an active member until his illness, when he encountered Rev. Father Peter Brady, an Irish missionary working at Awka, where John himself was a painter and barber. It was the sympathetic care Father Brady showed to John when he was in Adazi hospital that won him over to the Catholic Church. On his recovery, John not only became an ardent Catholic but invited the Father to come and establish the Catholic Church in Amanuke. John met with very stiff

opposition from Amanuke people — Protestants and pagans alike. They threatened to harm him (and the Father) should he persist in his venture. In the beginning he made his little house in Amanuke serve as the Catholic church. Father Brady and other priests who helped him at Awka came to John's house to celebrate Mass amidst strong opposition by the people. Indeed, to prevent the use of John's house as a church the people forcibly planted two lady-teachers there, but John and the Father were undaunted.

Meanwhile the Catholic community at Amanuke began to grow. Land for a church became necessary, but it was very difficult to get it because of the people's hostile attitude to the Catholic Church. At last, land was found through the generosity of John's cousin, Ndisi Umerie, who became converted to the Catholic faith from paganism. He argued that since the church could not be built up in the sky, land must be provided at all cost. The question he asked on that occasion — O je-ebi n'enu? (Will the church be built up in the sky?) — to justify his action in donating land for the church building became to this day the name of the place where the Catholic church stands in Amanuke.

Throughout John's conflict with his people, John got moral and financial help from the ADCU, which became interested in the matter. In its pursuit of the Amanuke case the ADCU itself got assistance from a newly-founded Catholic laity organisation — the Eastern

Nigeria Catholic Council (ENCC)[49] as well as from some individual Catholics like Peter E. Chukwurah of Abatete. The building of the church (which also served as the local Catholic school) began in 1960 and was completed in 1962. Following the success of the Amanuke case the ADCU increased its support for oppressed Catholics throughout Awka Division.

ADCU and Native Vocations

Another unique contribution of the ADCU towards Catholic Church growth in the area was its support of native vocations to the priesthood. In 1947 when the union was formed there was hardly a dozen native priests in the whole of Eastern Nigeria. The table on the next page shows the state of church personnel in the four existing dioceses in the Eastern Region five years later.

For a long time the training of the indigenous clergy was regarded by the people as the concern of the missionaries themselves and of a few benefactors, generally from overseas. Very little aid came from local sources, except a few devoted teachers and catechists who sponsored some seminarians. The individual seminarian generally did not get much encouragement from his parents. In many cases there was opposition instead. There was little done at group level to encourage vocations to the priesthood.

TABLE 5: EASTERN NIGERIA: CATHOLIC CHURCH PERSONNEL 1952/1953

Diocese	Total population	Catholics	Snr. Sem.	Jnr. Sem.	Missionary Fathers	African Fathers	Missionary Sisters	African Sisters	Teachers
Onitsha	1,769,000	164,313	17	56	72	5	38	4	2,723
Owerri	2,500,000	293,000	8	84	73	8	28	10	3,866
Calabar	1,541,000	74,086	6	40	42	1	34	38	1,740
Ogoja	1,000,000	16,600	-	3	30	-	21	-	1,016
Total	6,910,000	547,999	31	183	217	14	121	52	9,345

(Source: Apostolic Delegation of British East and West Africa – Statistics 1952/1953)

The ADCU did a lot to create this awareness among the laity. It did so by usually reading a special address of congratulations to newly ordained priests of the division and it also presented gifts to them. In one of such addresses to a priest ordained in 1973 the union said:

> Dear Rev. Father,
> When we, the Awka District Catholic Union representatives heard the news of your priestly ordination, we were filled with great joy....
> Yours is a great task, a great sacrifice, a delicate work that needs devotion to duty and tact. ... We as lay men are solidly behind the clergy. Wherever you work, pray God to guide you in your arduous task by creating an atmosphere of mutual understanding and healthy cooperation between the clergy and the laity.[50]

The great increase in vocations which marked the period after 1970, and the corresponding increase in the local people's support for the indigenous priests[51] can partly be attributed to the initial awareness of the importance of native priests which the ADCU tried to create in the minds of the people. The old Awka Division is today one of the largest sources of native priests and religious in Nigeria.[52] The ADCU asked for and got a chaplain in 1962. He was Rev. Father Ferdinand Ugwueze, a native priest.[53] His presence gave a new fillip to the members of the union. It also gained for it more support of Church authorities.

ADCU and Political Activities

Besides its activities in purely church affairs, the ADCU helped to sensitize the Catholic laity in political affairs in the country. Hitherto Catholics tended to keep aloof from politics. Due to the activities of the ADCU, especially its enlightenment talks to Catholics in different towns, many Catholics became interested in running for political offices in the country. In 1951 the ADCU approved the candidatureship of some of her members for some seats for Awka Division in the proposed Eastern House of Assembly. The members included Pius Amaefuna of Adazi, I.K. Anadi of Oreri and Chief A.N. Onyiuke of Nimo.[54] Amaefuna and Onyiuke won but Anadi was defeated. The union further encouraged Catholics to contest seats in the local, district and county councils. Indeed results of some of the elections in some areas show the extent of its work. For instance, in Aguata District Council elections in 1958 twenty-one out of the thirty-eight elected members were Catholics. Six were non-Christians.[55] Although not all the elected members remained active members of the ADCU, the impact of ADCU support was undeniable.

Despite its considerable achievements, the ADCU, like many pioneer organisations, had many weak points. To begin with, it lacked strong grassroots support. The youth were not very much involved in its activities.

In the same way, although women were members, those who were active were few. The first step to organize the women's wing of the union was in 1958, and by April 1959 only Adazi and Achina zones out of the four zones of the union had inaugurated women's wing.[56] Not much was heard of their activities later. The women's wing however served a useful purpose in making women aware of their special role in the church.

Lack of funds was another major obstacle to the union. Member-towns did not pay promptly their levies. It will be recalled that the Secondary Technical School project was grounded mainly because of lack of funds. Despite these weaknesses, the ADCU must be commended not only because of what it was able to achieve but also for its pioneering role in the area of militant Catholic lay movements. Some of its methods, like the zoning system and the holding of meetings in different towns were adopted by various Catholic organisations later. Its attempt to draw attention to the plight of lay church workers was to become a major issue for the church in later years.[57]

CHAPTER FOUR

THE EASTERN NIGERIA CATHOLIC COUNCIL

As was seen in the last chapter, the activities of the ADCU were very much localized. Outside Awka Division very little was known about it. [1] There was no similar movement outside the division. The movement which was to involve for the first time the greatest number of lay Catholics in Eastern Nigeria, and which was to set the tune of Catholic action for more than a decade was the Eastern Nigeria Catholic Council (ENCC).

In this chapter an attempt will be made to study the origin of this movement, its aims and objectives, its strengths and weaknesses, its key figures and the amount of support it enjoyed from both the clergy and various segments of the laity themselves. Because of its close connection with the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme introduced by the Eastern Nigeria Government in 1956, the ENCC has unfortunately been given rather narrow treatment by scholars with the result that little or no attention has been given to the personality and dynamism of some of its leaders, the magnitude of the problems they encountered in organizing such a mass movement of lay Catholics for the first time; the obstacles they encountered even from "within". [2] Indeed, a key

question to be examined is, how capable of independent action were the leaders of the ENCC? Were they mere instruments of the clergy?

Although formed towards the end of 1956, the ENCC had its roots in another little known Catholic Laity Organisation which greatly inspired it. This was the Order of the Knights of St Mulumba (KSM).[3] This Knighthood was named after Saint Matthias Mulumba — leader of the twenty-two Catholic martyrs who were killed in Uganda in 1886 for their Christian faith. It was an indigenous Order of Catholic Knighthood, founded in 1953 by an indigenous Catholic priest, Father Anselm I. Ojefua.[4] He founded it with the active cooperation and support of the Church hierarchy in Nigeria, notably Archbishop Charles Heerey of Onitsha Archdiocese, Bishop Joseph B. Whelan of Owerri Diocese and Bishop P. J. Kelly of Benin. Father Ojefua was one of the first indigenous priests from the diocese of Benin. Giving reasons for founding the Order of Knights of St Mulumba he said,

> At that time our leading Catholics were being snatched away by some so-called high-powered secret societies like the Freemasons and Ogboni. So it came to us that if we grouped Catholics together in the same way, they could have similar influence. So we started and began to get together (sic) some influential Catholics. Thus the Order started and has grown along that line.[5]

Father Ojefua was inspired by similar movements in America and England — the Knights of St Columbus

and the Knights of St Columbanus respectively. According to him the movement was very much welcomed by lay Catholics, especially the elite among them. These men, he said,

> saw that their counterparts in the masons and Ogboni seemed to be dominating but on account of their faith, they (the Catholics) would not dare to join those societies, and so when this (movement) was announced, it was virtually what they were waiting for, and it has proved very well ever since. [6]

Freemasons and members of the Ogboni Fraternity were known to have been highly influential in the Nigerian public life, but Catholics were forbidden to join such societies because their doctrine and practice are believed to be against the Catholic faith. There was therefore no doubt that a body such as the KSM could be used effectively as a counterforce to them, and its appeal to the Catholic elite is therefore quite understanding. Another reason, however, has been suggested for the appeal of the KSM to Catholics at the time and even today. [7] This is the fact that it gave lay Catholics a special status in the church which was denied them in the traditional society since traditional title-taking was still forbidden to Catholics, and although the ban has now been lifted in many towns, the Ozo titled Christian does not seem to command much respect within the Christian community like his counterpart in the traditional society. The Igbo lay Catholic wanted a status in the

church similar to that enjoyed by the clergy and the religious because of a special rite of "ordination" or "profession" which they receive and which in Igbo is called echichi. Therefore, to be knighted lifted a lay Catholic above others who are not knights. Characteristically, the same word, echichi, is used for the ceremony of making a person a knight as well as ordaining a priest or professing a religious. Father Ojefua admitted the possibility of this appeal of having a special status which the knighthood confers on the lay man in the Catholic Church as one of the reasons for the Igbo Catholic man's enthusiasm for the knighthood. "Some people", he said, "I think, thought there was a kind of privilege or prestige attached to the knighthood unfortunately, but that was'nt our motive." [8]

The KSM was inaugurated at Owerri in the chapel of Holy Ghost College on 14 June 1953 with only twenty three persons present. The movement however soon began to embrace more and more Catholic lay men, especially the elite. Today members number in thousands and can be found in all the Catholic dioceses in Nigeria. [9]

At the time of the formation of KSM Catholics in the Eastern Region of Nigeria were a political minority, having little or no representation in the newly-formed representative government which came in the wake of constitutional changes then taking place in Nigeria.

For instance, the cabinet formed for the Eastern Nigeria Government on January 5, 1952 had only one Catholic, as the table below shows. [10]

TABLE 6

PROTESTANT/CATHOLIC REPRESENTATION IN E. NIGERIA, 1952

NAME	RELIGION	PORTFOLIO
Eyo Ita	Protestant	Natural Resources
S.J. Una	Catholic	Public Health
R.I. Uzoma	Protestant	Education
E.I. Oli	"	Local Government
S.W. Ubani-Ukoma	"	Lands & Survey
S.T. Muna	Unknown	Works
M.O. Agwu	Protestant	Nil
R.J.E. Koripamo	Unknown	"
Dr M.I. Okpara	Protestant	"

Even four years later (1956), the position had not changed. Catholics retained only one seat in the cabinet as is shown in the next table. [11]

TABLE 7

PROTESTANT/CATHOLIC REPRESENTATION IN E. NIGERIA, 1956

NAME	RELIGION	PORTFOLIO
Dr N. Azikiwe	Protestant	Premier and Internal Affairs
Dr M.I. Okpara	"	Health
S.E. Imoke	"	Finance (replaced Mbonu Ojike who died in 1956)
Dr E. Emole	"	Agriculture

NAME	RELIGION	PORTFOLIO
I.U. Akpabio	Protestant	Education
W.N. Onubogu	"	Development
I.U. Umeh	"	Trade
P.O. Ururuka	Catholic	Industries
Dr E.A. Esin	Protestant	Welfare

The Catholic minority position in the government stood in sharp contrast to her majority position both in population and in the number of schools owned by the different religious denominations in Eastern Nigeria. For instance, out of the 4,843 primary schools owned by the voluntary agencies (the missions and other private agencies) in 1960 the Catholic Mission alone owned 2,466 while all the Protestant Missions owned 1,897.[12] Four years later (1964), the position had not changed much, as the figures below show.[13]

TABLE 8.

OWNERSHIP OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN E. NIGERIA, 1964

MANAGING BODY	NO. OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS
Roman Catholic	2,406
County Councils	1,473
Anglican	938
Methodist	279
Presbyterian	225
Qua Iboe	170
Lutheran	78
Salvation Army	37
U.N.A.	36
S.D.A.	33
Baptist	21
Government	11
Others	279

Perhaps, the greatest achievement of KSM at its inception in 1953 was twofold: first, it helped to form the nucleus of lay Catholic leaders on a wider area for the first time in the region and beyond. Some of these leaders were to be in the forefront of the ENCC later on. [14] Secondly, it began to make the Catholics, especially the elite, to be concious of their minority position in the distribution of political power as Nigerians began to assume political power in the country. This awareness had grave consequences later. As noted by Abernethy, "The assumption of power by Nigerians, particularly at the regional level where a single party effectively controlled each legislature, held important implications for church-state relations." [15]

The KSM, for reasons to be considered later, did not (at least openly) fight the first major issue that nearly caused serious conflict between the Catholic Church and the state in Eastern Nigeria. This was the proposal made in 1953 by the Minister of Education, R.I. Uzoma, outlining the future developments in primary education in the Region. [16] Essentially, the scheme proposed the following: (a) An eight-year primary education to be gradually reduced to six as the standard of teaching improved; (b) Education which would be "universal", that is, affording "all children in the Region .... a basic primary education", [17] and (c) Handing over ultimately the control of education

and expansion of primary schools to Local Education Authorities. The bone of contention in the new scheme was (c) above. The words of the proposed system were not ambiguous as to the intention of the Government to secularize the control of schools:

> Our policy will be that the control of primary education will become the responsibility of the Local Government bodies. The actual responsible body will be termed 'The Local Education Authority', and it will work through a Local Education Committee. It is our intention that the Local Education Authority will become responsible for the establishment of new schools and the financing of primary education. [18]

The Catholic Church did not delay in challenging this attempt to increase government control of education and reduce the role of voluntary agencies. The challenge however came not from the KSM but from the Church hierarchy. The KSM was still a new and young organisation with few members. Besides, as intended by the founder, it was meant to work secretly and not to engage openly in any controversy. Furthermore, Catholic bishops had premonition of Government's intention in parts of West Africa to control education more than before. [19] Thus they were quick with an answer to the Government. The Catholic bishops made their stand clear on education in a publication titled "The Bishop's Joint Circular on Education". It was a three-page document signed by Archbishop Heerey, President of the Board of Bishops of Nigeria and the Cameroon, on behalf of the bishops. The document,

published in 1953, reiterated the Church's traditional stand on education since the time of Pope Pius XI in 1929, [20] which is seen as partnership between three agencies: the Church, the state and the family. As this document was to form the basis of all future Catholic Church documents on education, it is useful to recall here some of its highlights. To the state the bishops ascribed the right

> to control the secular – though not the religious – subjects in the school curriculum; to impose timetable and schemes of work, to demand certain professional qualifications for teachers ... ; to supervise academic standards; to plan and coordinate schooling facilities. [21]

While conceding these and similar powers to the government, the bishops however warned that "we in no sense offer them (the Government) complete and exclusive control". To parents the bishops insisted on what they called their "natural right" to select the school where their children are to be educated and who will teach them. The bishops further warned that a denial of this right by any government would be resisted. Indeed, with particular reference to the Nigerian situation the bishops said,

> If the Nigerian Government were to try to suppress Catholic schools, either by closing them or converting them into State or County Council non-denominational schools, it should be resisted by every freedom-loving citizen.

This was a direct reference to the bone of contention referred to above, namely, the proposal to entrust more powers on the Local Education Authorities as envisaged in the 1953 Government Education Plan. According to the bishops, the primary duty of the Local Education Authorities, and especially the Local Education Committees they were to set up, was to aid and not displace the missions in education. With the 'cooperation' such as was envisaged by the bishops, they argued that there might not be a need for special 'County' as opposed to 'mission' schools. The bishops concluded their Circular with another note of warning to the Government against creating a cleavage in the school system:

> It would be a great pity, indeed a great tragedy, if a line of cleavage were drawn in Nigeria between schools, so that some would be known as 'denominational' or 'religious' schools and others as 'lay', 'state' or 'Council' schools. Every school, if it is to fulfil its highest aim, must be both a religious and a state school... [22]

Thus by the beginning of 1954 the battle-line in education had virtually been drawn between the State and the Church, especially the Catholic Church. [23] As was said earlier, the Catholic laity did not play any significant part so far in the education debate. The KSM was still in its infancy. Besides, the Government did not press on further with the UPE scheme until 1956. Many reasons were responsible for this. They included a change of leadership in the East.

(Here Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe became the Premier in 1954, and I.U. Akpabio became the Minister of Education). Furthermore, and more importantly, as Abernethy pointed out, "the breakdown of the local rating system in 1955 and 1956 radically altered the major assumptions on which the early planning for universal primary education in the East had been based". [24] Mr Uzoma's original UPE scheme lacked thorough planning. The financial support for the scheme was not forthcoming from the Local Council; nor could the Government alone shoulder it.

The Birth of ENCC

The birth of the ENCC towards the end of 1956 came with the reintroduction of the UPE that year by the Government. The obvious assumption is that there was a correlation between the formation of ENCC and the introduction of the UPE. How far that was so will be seen later. Many scholars have examined the reasons for the reintroduction of the UPE. [25] Here suffice it to mention just a few. The Region had attained self-government and the politicians wanted to justify it by having greater control over education, which was greatly desired by the people, and which was regarded (rightly) as a powerful instrument of social and economic development, and which should therefore not be left entirely in the hands of voluntary agencies as was the case uptil then. Again, the UPE

had already taken off successfully in the West since 1955. The East would not want to be beaten on this vital issue. Furthermore, many people felt that what the old scheme of Uzoma needed was modification and not total abandonment. Steps were, therefore, taken to modify it. The result was the new UPE programme of 1956. It contained the following policy guidelines:

(a) that proprietorship of existing voluntary agency (V.A.) schools would remain unchanged but all new primary schools would be under the control of Local Authorities – normally a district council;
(b) that unopened V.A. schools whose construction had begun before 31 May, 1956 and which had applied by August 23 to open could be managed by the sponsoring agency, but proprietorship would be assumed by the Local Authorities;
(c) that existing V.A. schools might not be allowed to expand more than a triple stream;
(d) that employment of teachers in Local Government schools, whether managed by Roman Catholic or Protestant missions, might be based on inter-denominational lines;
(e) that children who had registered for UPE but had been unable to gain admission to existing schools would be assigned to other schools by education officers in consultation with the local district planning committee. 26

So the scheme itself contained elements which Catholics ordinarily considered as limiting their freedom of choice of schools as well as threatening the safety of their children's religion. Items (d) and (e)

were most sensitive in this regard. Yet UPE was not the sole factor among Catholic opinion. Besides the nature of the provisions in the Guidelines, Catholic laity opinion was formed just as much by circumstances and events before the publication of the UPE Guidelines as by the actual implementation of the programme. Among the predetermining factors which helped to shape Catholic opinion, and later, reactions were 'provocative utterances' credited to Protestants. The commonest and, perhaps most humiliating to Catholics, was the reference by their detractors (mainly the Protestant rivals) to their numerical but politically inconsequential power in the Region. They called Catholics "the leaves of the oil-bean tree (Pentaclethra macrophyla) which are of no use for wrapping food". This refers to what is numerous but without much importance.[27] The Catholics ironically turned this statement to their political advantage. The leaders of the ENCC decided to educate their large Catholic followers at the grass-roots level on their position as a political minority group in the Region, which they claimed partly explained the new UPE policy. Thus it could be argued, and it has been argued, that the ENCC did not embark on politics because of the large number of Catholics and Catholic sympathizers it had at the grass-roots level but that it used this factor of numerical superiority when politics seemed to be the only avenue left for it to gain power in the East. In the words of one

ENCC leader,

> the ENCC provided a very powerful answer against the intrigue of enemies of the Church in those days either in government or in the House of Assembly. They (leaders of ENCC) did it by educating the people because the credo of the ENCC by the time was the question of battle through numbers. And it worked wonders. Infact it was the magic wand for the ENCC. [28]

More will be said later on the 'battle-through-numbers' strategy.

Recalling the circumstances of the birth of ENCC one of the pioneer members said:

> What gave rise to the ENCC was the education issue — the problems connected with education in the Region. We Catholics sought for a way to contain the issues as they arose but could not. Meanwhile we had started the Knights of Blessed (now Saint) Mulumba but found we still needed another arm to tackle such issues as education which the KSM could not tackle in the open. So we began to think of a body. The ENCC was the result. [29]

The first preliminary meeting of the organisation was held at the Immaculata Primary School Onitsha on 7 December, 1956 but the inaugural meeting took place at Enugu on 18 January, 1957 in the Holy Rosary School Ogui. [30] The meeting was convened by a renowned and veteran headmaster, P.H. Okolo. [31] Thirty-six parishes from Onitsha Archdiocese sent two official delegates each. There were over 100 observers, Mr. J.M. Nwosu [32] was elected President of the new organisation, and D.P. Adigweme the Secretary. The

meeting deliberated extensively on the education issue (UPE), especially the right of parents to choose schools for their children.

No sooner did the Catholics form the ENCC than the Protestants (mainly the Anglicans) formed a rival organisation called the Convention of Protestant Citizens (CPC). This was inaugurated at Onitsha on 2 February, 1957 at a meeting of over 400 Protestants. Declaring the reason for its existence the leaders said:

> A movement like this became necessary when people saw that what Roman Catholic Church wants, at least in this Region is the capture of political power and the enslavement, as is their (sic) natural practice, of those who do not worship Roman and Irish masters. [33]

The Convention thereafter vouched to do all in its power to alert all Protestants to the new "threat" posed to all non-Catholics in the region by Catholics. Both the ENCC and the CPC thereafter engaged in enlightenment propaganda among their members. This increased rivalry among them and tension in the Igbo area. One major form the rivalry took was constant attack through the media of each other's activities. [34] The ENCC seemed to be particularly incensed with what it called

> unjust misrepresentations, incitements and misinterpretations (by the Protestants) to disrespect the Regional head of the Catholic Church of Nigeria in the person of His Grace, Most Rev Dr C. Heerey, CSSP, Archbishop of Onitsha. [35]

One of such CPC's "attacks" which the ENCC often referred to was a publication in a local newspaper, Eastern Observer, in which the CPC's chief organiser, Chike Okongwu, was alleged to have attacked Archbishop Heerey, following the Archbishop's speech at a Foundation-stone laying ceremony in a Catholic Church in Onitsha on 14 January 1962.[36] On 23 January, the Eastern Observer carried the report that

> The Convention of Protestant Citizens calls attention of the Regional Government once again to the danger to the orderly progress with which the Region is faced by allowing religious organization to set up educational and social institution in competition with the Government.[37]

Spurred on by the Catholic press in Owerri,[38] the ENCC decided to make its first impact through the forthcoming elections to the Eastern House of Assembly. The elections took place on 15 March, 1957 and the voting pattern clearly showed a Catholic majority. In the five constituencies within Onitsha Archdiocese the results were thus:[39]

TABLE 9

VOTING PATTERN INTO EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, 1957

ZONE	CATHOLIC	PROTESTANT
Udi	2	2
Nsukka	5	-
Awgu	2	-
Awka	1	2
Onitsha	2	3

Although the religious factor featured very much in the elections, it must be pointed out that the ENCC voting pattern tended to support the NCNC which was the leading political party in the Region. Some Catholics, however, stood as independent candidates in some of the elections and won. [40]

ENCC LEADERSHIP

The 'battle-through-numbers' strategy of the ENCC which was at work in the political elections was not achieved so easily. It required both the dynamic leadership and personal magnetism of some of the ENCC leaders as well as the effort to create in the Catholics at the grass-roots level an awareness of the issues at stake.

The ENCC was blessed from the beginning with able, dynamic and devoted leaders. They came from people with different academic and occupational backgrounds. They included teachers, lawyers, businessmen and women. The more prominent in these groups were self-employed persons. One of the most fascinating of these persons was the President of the organisation since its inception. He was J.M. Nwosu from Nnewi. He was a motor transporter and had little or no formal education. But his personal magnetism and dynamism earned him among his admirers names such as "Double Engine", "Tiger" and Okwo-nma. [41]

"Double Engine" refers to his excessive show of energy when on ENCC campaign tours of villages and towns. Recalling one of his experiences with him on those tours, a member of the ENCC said

> I remember one day we went to Aguata for a campaign. We broke into two to meet at Amesi. I and Chukwurah had to go to Umuomaku. He and G.O.G. Ume-Ezeoke had to go to Awgbu. We came back at 2 a.m. but before we came back he had covered three other towns within the night. He could drive from morning to evening for 24 hours..... If it is a question of giving blows he can give you that. [42]

The lack of literary education did not prove a hindrance to him. He was said to have often boasted in pidgin English before his followers,

> My men, book I no know. What I have, I give to God. Let us give God our support. Those who say I no know book, they will be there writing their book while I go with my energy and blow and get something for God. [43]

Equally powerful was the Administrative Secretary of the organisation, Mr. A.N. Okono. He too had little formal education and was formerly a tailor. He displayed great administrative acumen as Secretary, and was responsible for editing the organisation's monthly magazine called The ENCC Bulletin. [44]

Although teachers formed a reasonable percentage of the Leadership cadre in the organisation, [45] it is significant that self-employed persons were in the majority. This had far-reaching effects on the organisation. It made some members of the ENCC speak

freely and boldly on any issues without fear of being victimized by their employers. In the case of teachers they were not so free. They feared possible victimization from either the priest school-managers or the government authorities. For this reason many teachers declined to take up important office in the organisation. Even the Catholic Teachers' Association (CTA) which was formed some years later did not come out openly in support of the ENCC.[46] Some teachers saw the ENCC as another arm of the Church with which they had grievances. The ENCC appealed to teachers to sink their differences with the clergy, especially school-managers, and face the more "serious" threat to the Church from the Protestants. In one of its meetings the members resolved that "Teachers should be made to know that the fight now is Catholic versus CMS, and not Catholic versus Authorities."[47] Indeed, the uncertain stand of Catholic teachers on the proposed educational reform was a source of grave concern to the Church. The KSM had earlier (1956) set up a sub-committee to examine teachers' attitude to the proposed changes in educational policy. The committee cautioned great care to be taken in handling the teachers' grievances and recommended, among other things, the following seven measures to improve their conditions of service:

(a) Introduction of a housing scheme for teachers;

(b) Giving more responsible posts to teachers;
(c) Providing higher educational training for Nigerians to qualify them to take over the Secondary Schools and Teacher Training Colleges;
(d) Encouraging Catholic teachers to take up appointments as Education Officers under Local Education Authorities;
(e) Organising regular conferences of Supervisory Staff, and taking their recommendations into consideration in formulating a Catholic education policy;
(f) Fostering a more cordial relationship between the clergy and the Catholic Education Staff;
(g) Reposing more confidence in teachers placed in authority. [48]

The attitude of the ENCC to the plight of teachers seemed to be that of rallying them first to fight what it considered the external foe before tackling their problems. No serious step was taken to improve their conditions of service until the Government took over all schools in 1970.

Despite the lukewarmness and feet-dragging which some teachers and other members of the ENCC showed at various times, it is widely agreed that the success of the organisation was largely due to the dedication, dynamism and spirit of sacrifice of its leaders, most of whom were self-employed. In the words of the chaplain of the organisation, Rev. Monsignor M. Eneja,

> The spirit of sacrifice is what made the members different from other societies.

> They came to work for Christ, and they were prepared for whatever difficulties they might face in that work.... When someone becomes a real member of the ENCC, he has come to suffer for Christ. He is not afraid of difficulties. [49]

Many members are known to have not only given their time and energy to the movement but their money and cars, especially during the campaign and enlightenment tours of the ENCC. [50] This partly explains why, despite the poor finances of the organisation, the members could achieve so much. [51]

Reaching the Masses

Although the changes which the UPE scheme introduced in 1956 made many citizens of the Region alert, and indeed affected them, [52] the ENCC also used various methods to reach the masses. One of these was organized tours of various parishes and stations. Stations to be visited were usually notified in advance. The ENCC leaders would address the church-members of a town or village after Mass on a fixed Sunday. The priest incharge might or might not lend his support, depending on his attitude to the movement. On this issue of clerical support a leader of the ENCC said,

> No priest came out openly against the ENCC. You know that from their training they do things quietly. However we could judge those who supported the movement from the way

> they cooperated, especially in making announcements as to meetings of the ENCC. [53]

The station and village tours proved to be one of the most effective means of winning members and supporters for the organisation. In the urban areas, such as Onitsha, the visits were spread to streets and individual homes. Indeed, Onitsha was the main centre of the movement and the source of its supporters. It was equally the centre of the rival Protestant movement, the CPC. This is so because there was a concentration of parishes and people there. Meetings were more frequent and people could easily be rallied in times of emergency.

Other methods employed by organisers of the ENCC to win support included mass rallies, [54] the award of scholarships to indigent children, [55] the formation of youth and women wings of the movement and the direct recruitment of pupils in schools. With regard to the last method, the organisers of the movement placed great importance in making children from an early age aware of it. Thus, writing to the headmasters of Catholic schools on the issue of the three-pence annual levy on school children in support of the movement, the Administrative Secretary said,

> Our intention is not only to collect money from these our junior members, but also to instil in them the idealism of Catholic action from school age...

> It is a great disservice to the cause of our faith for any Catholic to fail to show active interest in support of this all-embracing Catholic lay organisation. [56]

The question arises, to what extent was the ENCC a mass movement? The leaders claim it was not an elitist but a mass movement of the Catholic laity. They argue that this is proved by the victory of most of their members who stood as candidates for elections, even sometimes as independents. They say that their assumption that "Once a Catholic, an ENCC member!" was no miscalculation. Investigations, however, reveal that not every Catholic was an active member of the organisation, though many were aware of its existence. [57] Membership tended to increase where the clergy were strongly behind the movement. What gave the movement the semblance of a mass movement was its ability to rally people at short notice and to go on mass demonstration. This was particularly so with the women. Their part in the movement will be examined in chapter five.

The ENCC and the Clergy

Reference has frequently been made to the ENCC and the clergy. The attitude of the clergy to the movement was not uniform in places and at all times. Even the top hierarchy of the Catholic clergy were not

all in agreement as to the amount of support to give it. In Calabar Diocese, for instance, it was reported that Bishop J. Moynagh was not a warm supporter of it.[58] He was opposed to its open confrontational stance to the Government on the education issue. This was partly due to the minority position of Catholics in his diocese, unlike in the dioceses of Onitsha and Owerri which have a large Igbo population which supports the Catholic Church generally. In Onitsha Archdiocese, Archbishop Heerey gave cautious support to the movement.[59] He was present at the inaugural meeting, and later appointed priest-chaplains for the organisation. Some of the white clergy supported it but some were rather aloof or indifferent. The local clergy were equally divided in their attitude to it. Some came out openly in its support and acted as the chaplains. Others feared the laity might go too far and become uncontrollable. Explaining the different positions taken by the white and African clergy on the ENCC Monsignor Martin Maduka, a native priest, said,

> The white Catholic priests welcomed the ENCC at first as a ready weapon to restore Catholic Church control of her numerous schools which was threatened by the Government's UPE scheme. They however wanted the organisation disbanded after the crisis because they feared it might become too powerful to threaten their hold on schools themselves. The school was their main source of strength and any body which controlled it might undermine their power. So they had strong misgivings about the further aims and objectives of the ENCC.[60]

According to Maduka it was to forestall such eventualities that the white clergy began to mobilize the youths as a possible counterforce to the ENCC. This led to the formation of a youth wing of the ENCC. It was led by Gabriel A.O. Eze. Gabriel, a native of Oba, was earlier from a CMS family.[61] It was while a petty trader in Sapoba – a town in Bendel State of Nigeria – that he was converted to the Catholic Church. He met with stiff opposition from his parents. To dissuade him from remaining a Catholic, Gabriel's father told him that Catholics generally did not grow wealthy like Protestants. They were, Gabriel recalled, in his father's words "people who wore trousers without shoes" – an obvious reference to their state of poverty. Gabriel however remained an ardent Catholic. Oba, his home town, was a strong CMS town with an active youth movement called Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF). Its activities and method of mobilizing the youth must have influenced Gabriel who nurtured the new ENCC Youth Wing along similar lines. The movement which began in 1957 in Onitsha soon spread to over twenty-five parishes in Onitsha Archdiocese before 1967.

According to Gabriel, the cause of the rift between the parent body of the ENCC and its youth wing was the refusal of the parent body to grant the youth wing an autonomous status. In his own words,

> I was a member of the ENCC but I did not like the way the movement was run. I was convinced the youths would not enjoy freedom if they operated under the ENCC. They would be unnecessarily restricted or rendered impotent. The youths wanted freedom to express themselves, even if they might go to excess. [62]

The conflict between both bodies sapped the youth wing of its energy, nevertheless the organisation was able to make useful contribution to Catholic Church growth. It mobilized the young people to take greater interest in church activities. The members, most of whom were drawn from young petty traders, craftsmen and apprentices in urban centres and school-leavers in the rural areas, began to feature prominently in social activities in parishes. They added flavour and life on such occasions as marriages and harvest/bazaars with their spontaneous songs and dancing. They usually provided free labour for the church especially in clearing new building sites and in the cleaning of church premises on a regular basis. There was no sex differentiation in their meetings, although this was frowned at at first by the church elders and parents of the boys and girls.

The movement at first made Sacred Heart Parish Onitsha its headquarters. This action later gave more credence to the accusation that the white priests manipulated the movement to their own advantage.

Sacred Heart Parish was for long controlled by white priests. It was partly to counter such an accusation and partly because of the civil war that Gabriel moved the headquarters to Oba, his home town.

Meanwhile, opposition to the youth organisation continued to grow especially among the native priests and the parent ENCC body. Attempts were made to call the youth to order by some native priests who clearly saw the youth organisation as an attempt by the white clergy to entrench their domination of church life and the schools. It will be recalled that at the time there were very few native priests, and the white priests occupied most positions of authority in the church and schools. For instance, in 1965 in Onitsha Archdiocese out of 27 parishes only 5 were headed by native priests; of the 4 teacher training colleges and 12 grammar schools only one was headed by a Nigerian.[63] There was considerable improvement in Nigerian participation by 1967 when the number of native priests appointed parish priests rose to 9, while the number of parishes had risen to 36. Nine out of the 19 grammar schools were headed by Nigerians.[64] Recalling one of his encounters with the youths Monsignor Maduka said,

> We native priests met him (Gabriel) and his group and tried to call him and his group to order. We told him to stop his actions which were tantamount to fighting the church but the white priests supported him.[65]

Attempts were also made to bring both groups together to iron out their differences. Speaking on this Maduka said:

> One occasion I came from Maku and invited Eze's party and J.M. Nwosu's party at G.O.G. Ume-Ezeoke's house to talk over the matter. I warned them not to let the ENCC die due to this in-fighting which the white priests seemed to be fanning. 'Remember the country is yours,' I said. 'The white priests may one day leave; you and your children would lose your rights'. [66]

The conflict was not resolved before the civil war broke out in 1967. The youth organisation continued to function during the war but this time its efforts were directed to bringing relief to the people through the distribution of food and drugs to the needy. At the end of the war Gabriel tried to revive the youth movement. The ENCC parent body was not revived after the war. A new Catholic laity movement was started.

Leaders of the ENCC decried the general lack of support by the clergy in many other areas. One of such areas was in the efforts of the organisation to raise funds for its work. At one of their meetings the members resolved to send a five-man delegation to the Archbishop of Onitsha to ask him to ensure "that the mission authorities take the ENCC into confidence ... and that parish priests be allowed to cooperate with the ENCC in the collection of two shillings dues." [67]

Indeed, some of the leaders accused the clergy in some places of withholding funds meant for the ENCC. [68]

Steps were taken to prevent this. In one of their resolutions members of the Working Committee of the organisation in Onitsha Archdiocese urged that

> Our chairman should announce in form of a warning to all parishes against the method of collecting ENCC money and keeping them unremitted, as that has given rise to loss of the Council's money, or will in future tend to misappropriation of ENCC funds. [69]

To be fair, the ENCC did not accuse the clergy of misappropriation of its funds, but it contended that more interest on the part of the clergy in the affairs of the organisation would have led to the generation of more funds for it. Where such cooperation and interest existed, the leaders of the ENCC were not slow in praising the parish priests. [70]

The misunderstanding between the clergy and leaders of the ENCC seemed to have worsened with time. Some members of the clergy, notably the Directors of Lay Apostolate, who were mainly white priests, [71] feared the movement was gaining much power, and was trying to suppress or assimilate other forms of lay Catholic action and prayer groups, especially those in existence before the ENCC. These bodies included the Legion of Mary, St Anthony's Guild and St Jude's Society. At a meeting with the Bishops of the Region held on 18 and 19 April 1966, the Directors submitted a Memorandum in which they accused the ENCC of the following: forcing Catholics to be members; trying to use the clergy to raise funds for itself; antagonizing persons of other religious belief, e.t.c. In a word, they claimed that

the ENCC, though it had performed very useful service to the Church, had outlived its purpose:

> The ENCC was founded by the Knights of St Mulumba ... to defend the interests of Catholic education at a time of crisis. This it did very effectively. After the crisis had passed the ENCC continued to exist but it had no specific purpose nor did it have determined means. [72]

They recommended a thorough reorganisation of the movement to bring it under greater Church control as well as to harmonize its activities with other lay Catholic organisations. The leaders of the ENCC in turn held a meeting with the Bishops on 30 April 1966 in which they presented a lengthy memorandum defending the organisation. [73] In it they accused the Directors of frustrating their plans and denying them avenues of raising funds.

> We are sorry to say that instead of giving us cooperation, some of the clergy act as impediments to our efforts in collecting funds. For example, at places like the Sacred Heart Parish Odoakpu, Umuoji, Amichi and Nimo there are discouraging sermons by some Directors of lay Apostolate against the ENCC; as a result people were reluctant to pay their dues. Funds meant for ENCC have been diverted to organisations headed by the Directors of the Lay Apostolate, and the Lady sponsored by the ENCC for training overseas and who up to the time of her training overseas was the organizing Secretary for the Women Wing of ENCC, has been snatched from the ENCC by the Directors of Lay Apostolate. [74]

To resolve the issue the Bishops set up a Commission comprising the clergy and the laity, and including members of the ENCC and Directors of Lay Apostolate. They were twenty-seven in number. [75] They met at Umuahia on 21 May 1966 but could not resolve the issues. The members however agreed to appoint a three-man Committee to review the Constitution of the ENCC. [76] It drafted a new constitution which renamed the organisation the "Nigerian Catholic Council". [77] Probably because of the Civil War which engulfed the country later, not much was done thereafter about the conflict.

The conflict between the ENCC and the clergy, and also between the ENCC and the state government, reveals many of the problems and difficulties sometimes encountered by lay people in their effort to participate more fully in the affairs of church and state. Although the Catholic Church has since the Second Vatican Council called upon the laity to play their proper role in both Church and State, [78] this in practice has sometimes created problems and tensions which take many years to diffuse. The extent to which the Catholic laity are "free" to play an active role in church affairs in the period following the demise of the ENCC will be examined in Chapter Six. To many leaders of the now defunct ENCC [79] the crux of the matter was fear on the part of the clergy that lay men might become too powerful in the church, and become

less subservient to church authority. In the words of the President of ENCC, "The clergy feared that the ENCC would boomerang; that after fighting the enemies of the Church, we might turn round to fight them. That was how some of them saw our organisation."[80]

CHAPTER FIVE

WOMEN AND CATHOLIC CHURCH GROWTH

Igbo women in general did not play any major role in the direction of Catholic Church growth in Igboland until the late fifties. Their role was in most cases secondary and supportive to that of men. This can be attributed to a number of factors: the place of women in African traditional religion, the delay in the education of girls, the celibate priesthood, the presence of women religious (nuns or sisters) and the general absence of leaders among the women themselves.

The place of the Igbo woman in the traditional religion has been studied in detail elsewhere.[1] Except for variations in some localities, especially among the Igbo west of the Niger River, Onitsha, Oguta and those inhabiting the northern fringes of Igboland,[2] a woman's religious activities were usually limited to what was personal to her, to her sex and her family. In the words of Basden,

> She enjoys no religious privileges beyond the attention she bestows on her own particular gods, consisting mostly of cones of clay and such-like humble materials. These are located either in the hut, but more usually near the place where she cooks the food.[3]

In addition to such domestic and personal religious duties which were directed to her well-being and that

of her family, and especially her children, she and her fellow women undertook services of a social and communal nature. This included the care of sacred places. They kept them tidy, swept the premises regularly and collectively, polished the walls with native chalk, etc. They also provided part of the food and animals required for sacrifice to divinities.[4]

These latter two functions, namely, cleaning the premises of shrines and providing the food or animals used in sacrifice, were quite significantly the two main duties performed by women in the church here from earliest times, and, to some extent, till today. Recalling such activities by the Christian women, a woman leader says,

> They organized the scrubbing of church floors, supplied firewood to the Father's house, collected eggs and fruits for the Reverend Fathers, and carried stones and sand to Adazi and other towns for building schools and churches.[5]

The delay in according girls equal education opportunity as boys also very much reduced and delayed women's contribution to church growth. The prejudice against women's education was, of course, not peculiar to the Igbo society. It was common to many African societies and the reasons are well known.[6] They include early marriage (sometimes child marriage), the use of girls for domestic chores from their early ages – usually from the age of four or

five,[7] fear that educated girls might make bad housewives and, finally, the poverty of many parents (in which case the little money available would be spent educating boys rather than girls!). Here, it is perhaps necessary to point out that if traditional society did not encourage the education of girls, the colonial government did not do much either in this regard. As a matter of fact its provisions for their education were grossly inferior to those made by the missions.[8]

Whatever the reasons, girls lagged very much behind boys in receiving formal education in the past. Various figures show it. For instance, in what was known as the Lower Niger Mission (roughly Southeast Nigeria today) there were in 1905 22 Boys' School as against 2 Girls' Schools;[9] again, in the Old Onitsha-Owerri Vicariate (which today comprises all the Catholic dioceses in Anambra, Imo and part of Rivers State of Nigeria) there were in 1948 116,972 school boys, and only 23,946 school girls; 866 Boys' Primary Schools as against 64 for girls.[10]

These differences in educational opportunity for boys and girls had far-reaching effects on their respective role as men and women in church affairs in Igboland, as in other parts of Nigeria with a similar situation. To begin with, because education through the school system was the chief means adopted by the Holy Ghost Fathers in evangelizing many parts

of Southeastern Nigeria,[11] most of the early converts were boys. It was from them that the teachers and catechists who were the main cooperators of the missionary priests were drawn. Girl-converts were few. Besides the imbalance in educational opportunites created in the school system, which adversely affected girls' chances of being converted, certain precautionary measures taken by the Church further worsened girls' opportunities for conversion. One of these measures was the regulation governing the Catechumenate in mission lands.[12] Girls were subjected to more stringent laws than boys before they were admitted into the Catholic Church. The most common and perhaps the strictest law was that no girl born of heathen parents could be baptized until assurance was given that she would contract a Christian marriage. This law was made to check the frequent lapse of girls into paganism as a result of marriage, after becoming a Christian. The application of this regulation meant that few girls were admitted into the Church. Commenting on the grave problem this regulation often created for girls' education and their becoming Christians, Sister Mary Magdalen (a pioneer missionary of girls' education in Southern Nigeria) wrote:

> There is one important point that must not be overlooked. It is useless to give girls a Christian education unless we are prepared to stand by them in the hour of trial. The Native girl is absolutely dependent on her family; she

> is in many cases only a financial asset to be sold to the highest bidder... If she is really married to a Christian husband things may go well with her, but few have the chance to contract a real marriage.[13]

Partly to face this problem and "protect" the catechumen girl, Catholic missionaries began to encourage the establishment of special marriage preparatory centres which were manned first by "trusted" Christian women, especially wives of teachers and catechists, and later, by sisters.[14] The work of such women could indeed be regarded as Catholic women's first major and direct contribution to Church growth. The activities of one of such women — Mrs. Veronica Okaih of Adazi — will be discussed at length below.

Another factor which indirectly, at least, retarded Catholic women's contribution to church growth is the celibate priesthood of the Catholic Church. Unlike Protestant clergymen who usually have wives, Catholic priests do not marry. The Catholic Church therefore does not enjoy the help which wives of Protestant clergy usually provided their Church by leading the womenfolk. In a society where sex segregation is common and strong, the celibate priest — however trusted and respected — cannot provide the type of leadership nor play the role a woman can play for her fellow women. He can give directives but will always maintain some distance from the women. In the

past, before the arrival of nuns, Catholic priests invariably made use of some trusted Christian women to carry out some services for the women. Although it could be argued that wives of Catholic teachers and catechists could and did play such a role, they were generally not specially trained or officially designated for this, whereas the wives of Protestant clergymen not only did so but were specially trained for it. In Awka, for instance, they had a special training school for it called Ama Nwanyi.[15] This school was established in the fifties by the Protestant Churches. Here the wives of the clergy and catechists spent about two years on leadership courses. This was usually about the same time their husbands were undergoing training for the priesthood or allied ministry in Umuahia. These women thereafter were expected to lead the womenfolk wherever their husbands ministered to the people. Wives of Protestant clergymen no doubt contributed immensely in organising their womenfolk.

Indeed, one of the earliest known assemblies of Anglican women called "Prayer Groups" was first started by Mrs. Maud Daws, the wife of an Anglican priest. The prayer groups became common in many Anglican churches. Every Anglican woman was eligible to become a member of the prayer group in her parish or station. Members at first met in the local church every Tuesday for group prayers. Soon they gradually began to hold

prayer sessions outside the church in private homes in turn. Large prayer groups broke into smaller units. At prayer sessions members read parts of the bible, reflected on the readings and prayed for and with the family where they assembled. At the end of it the leader gave some instruction on basic church doctrine, house-keeping and elementary hygiene in the home. The leader of a prayer group was usually the wife of the station teacher or catechist. Where there was a pastor, the pastor's wife presided. Once a month all the prayer groups within a local church met in the church to discuss their problems, exchange ideas and choose new topics for evangelism. It was these prayer groups that later became the Anglican Women's Guild. The guild, like the prayer group, embraced literally every church-going Anglican woman — irrespective of her marital status, or whether she was in full communion with the church. The Mothers' Union was introduced in the sixties to cater for those Christian mothers who were married in the church and who were in good standing with the church. It was earlier founded in England by Mary Elizabeth Sumner in 1876. The Mothers' Union may be likened to the Christian Mothers' Association (CMA) in the Catholic Church which will be examined later below. Both the Guild and the Union function today in almost every Anglican church in the former Eastern Nigeria.

Although the Catholic clergy had from very early times women religious (sisters) who worked along-side the priests as missionaries in South-eastern Nigeria,[16] these sisters could not play the same role among the lay women as the wives of Protestant clergymen did. The sisters' role was no doubt very significant in educating the women and children, both in good Christian living and health care, as has often been attested to.[17] For instance, the Holy Rosary Sisters – a missionary congregation of women religious, founded by Bishop Joseph Shanahan in 1924 to work in Igboland and other parts of Southeastern Nigeria – had by 1948 the following record of service; 102 primary, rural and vocational schools attended by about 17,000 children; 14 Teachers' Training Colleges and one secondary school staffed by the sisters with the assistance of 550 Nigerian teachers; 3 General hospitals, with 14,200 inpatients; 20 Maternity homes, 30 dispensaries which treated 120,620 patients with the assistance of 130 Nigerian nurses and probationers; a novitiate for training Nigerian sisters.[18] The impact of all these on the people, especially the women and young people, was undeniably great. In a tribute to Bishop Shanahan for his work in helping the Igbo woman develop, a woman leader once said:

> It was Bishop Shanahan who not only elevated but emancipated women from

> the slavery and bondage of pre-modern Ibo history... Before his arrival a great many Ibo girls were unimaginably miserable.[19]

These great achievements of the sisters notwithstanding, it must be pointed out that formal education, which was their principal means of training the women was, until about the last thirty years, not within the reach of many girls. Most female pupils were the daughters of teachers and a few civil servants who could afford the cost of education. Writing in this regard on the pioneer pupils of the first Catholic teacher training college for girls in Igboland – Holy Rosary College – a veteran lady teacher observed:

> The pioneer students were mostly daughters of the headmasters of schools in the then Eastern Nigeria because at the time people knew or cared for very little about the education of women. Girls were kept at home to help their mothers to do domestic work and to look after the little children. A few that went to school got married soon after they had completed Standard Six.[20]

Inevitably, the task of teaching the bulk of the non-school-going girls and women in many towns and villages the rudiments of the Christian faith and modern home management was not done by the sisters, who were, in any case few and mostly foreigners, nor by native female teachers, who were equally few, but

by the wives of teachers and catechists. These devoted lay women, some of whom got little formal education, were silent but indispensable help-mates for their husbands. Mission records unfortunately were generally silent about their work, and what little information one gathers comes mainly from oral interviews with a few of them still alive, or from their former pupils. Some of these "pupils" are themselves now in their sixties and early seventies. The younger women today usually look upon them as their "mothers" in the Christian faith.[21] The number of women who were trained by those wives of teachers and catechists in the early years of the church, especially from the thirties, in Igboland may never be known but the fruit of their work has remained. It is seen, for instance, in the numerous illiterate but devout Christian women who continue to witness to the Christian faith today.

Madam Veronica Okaih of Adazi

Most of these Christian mothers who trained young girls and women in private homes often acted singly. They had no formal association binding them. The main exception was the Christian Mothers' Association (CMA) which existed in some parishes. Its origin and activities will be discussed later in this chapter. Among the Christian mothers who worked singly in Old

Awka Division was Madam Veronica Okaih of Adazi.[22] Madam Okaih was the wife of the catechist in Adazi Central Mission in Awka Division. Her husband was Mr. Solomon Okaih, whose career had been examined in Chapter Two. Veronica had no formal education before her marriage to Solomon. She however underwent the usual special training given to girls whose husbands were teachers. It consisted mainly of catechism lessons for catechumens and special lessons in home management taught by a knowledgeable woman — again, usually the wife of another teacher. As missionaries began to penetrate the interior of Igboland and establish parish centres, it was customary for them to gather unmarried young mothers from their homes or (where they already cohabited with Christian husbands) from their husbands' houses, and bring them to the central mission in an effort to prevent cohabitation with their husbands before a Christian marriage. The women were usually kept in the homes of trusted Christian families for special training in Christian doctrine and home management. Solomon Okaih's house in Adazi was one of such homes. There, Veronica took special charge of the girls who came from the vast Adazi Parish.[23]

The women were of two categories. There were those who came for a full training course in home management in addition to learning the Christian catechism in preparation for a Christian marriage.

There were also those who just wanted a "crash" programme to enable them wed in the church. In this category one would find young pagan women who already had had children with their Christian husbands without contracting a Christian marriage. These women did not stay long at Madam Okaih's training centre. A month, two months or three was the usual length of time they stayed at the centre. The exact period however depended on how quickly the individual woman learnt the catechism.

Those in the first group were made up mainly of younger girls who were newly engaged to their husbands – many of whom were themselves teachers.[24] These teachers would send their fiancées to Madam Okaih to be given special training in home economics as well as in the Christian doctrine to prepare them for marriage. The home economics courses consisted mainly of the following: knitting, embroidery, dress-making, cookery and laundry. Veronica almost single-handedly organized and taught all these courses. In the catechism lessons, however, she got special help from her husband, Solomon. Some of the older and more brilliant trainees also helped in coaching the new trainees. Some of the girls also attended school in the nearby primary school. Girls in this first group usually stayed longer in Madam Okaih's training home. The centre itself was a long rectangular house which contained both the dwelling

rooms of the girls and Madam Okaih herself. Regulation in the centre was very strict. Male visitors – usually the fiancés of the girls – were allowed to see their wives under strict surveillance, and always in the open, that is, within the view of other inmates or Veronica herself. Formal fees were not charged but each fiancé would pay an agreed sum to Mr. Solomon Okaih for the maintenance of his fiancée while in training. Husbands of women on crash programme generally provided foods instead of money for the maintenance of their wives at the centre.

Veronica was deeply loved by the girls she trained. They had great respect for her, and praised her for her devotion to them and her rare intelligence, despite her lack of formal education. Speaking about her, one of her former pupils said:

> Mama was a great and intelligent woman. I believe had she opportunity for formal education, she would have gained much knowledge. She was wise and prudent, and was highly respected by people, especially by us – her daughters... She always looked like one deeply read.[25]

At the end of their training the girls were examined, and those that passed, were baptized. Then they went home to marry. Through such training, many women received basic Christian education as well as knowledge of elementary home management. Although Veronica's centre was rather elaborate, such training

centres were found in many of the newly established parishes, and were indispensable for the upbringing of Christian women long before the arrival of nuns.[26] Part of the reasons for their obscurity was that mission records generally gave credit to the catechists and teachers themselves instead of their wives for the work done. For instance, on the occasion of the death of Solomon Okaih, the Irish Holy Ghost Fathers, writing about him, noted in their bulletin:

> One work of his which cannot go unrecorded was that for the Christian family. Newly baptised young men and women who were about to enter the married state, having just come from pagan environment, had no conception of a Christian home, and started their life's task of rearing a Catholic family at a great disadvantage. This problem was noted from rather early times but no solution could be found till Solomon, who had married and was building up his own home, and with the help of his devoted and Catholic wife, trained them in the art of home management and taught them how to educate and train children in a Catholic atmosphere. This work he continued till the advent of Missionary Sisters, who took over his most important work in the consolidation of the faith. It is estimated that some thousand young Catholic women received training in Solomon Okaih's home.[29]

Although Solomon was of immense help to his wife in training the girls, the bulk of the work was actually done by Veronica herself. The work of women like Veronica remained invaluable to the church even after

the arrival of nuns in many places, and the gradual increase of priests and parish centres. With the spread of schools and increase in the number of school-going girls the need gradually decreased.

The major shortcomings of the work of Veronica and women like her must however be mentioned. They generally lacked continuity. Again, there was no uniform standard. Except where the work of a woman was taken over by nuns and made a formal training institute,[28] such work usually ceased when the woman discontinued it for one reason or another. Moreover, the amount of knowledge acquired in those centres and its quality very much depended on the individual woman's ability and the help she got from others.

Organized Women's Activities — Origins

What has been described above centres largely on the efforts of individual lay women towards Catholic Church growth in Igboland. Whereas in traditional society women tended to act as a team or a group to exert pressure on society and make meaningful contribution to its growth,[29] Christian women did not seem to have evolved similar powerful associations in the Church until the late fifties or early sixties. Some of the reasons for this have been examined above.

Another important reason is that whereas women's associations in the traditional society were usually formed along traditional lines of lineages, marriages, age-sets, etc, and were therefore more natural and had stronger ties, the Christian Church created a new social order based mainly on conversion, baptism and membership of the Church. The degree of cohesiveness and strength of such church associations depended largely on the depth of Christian awareness and personal commitment of individual members as well as their number. Associations among Christians, especially the women, understandably were initially not as strong as those formed along traditional lines. The need for manual work for the church was the commonest cause of such associations among Christian women. As their number increased, and some converts became fervent, the women began to add activities of a more spiritual nature. A picture of what such associations and their activities looked like before the fifties can be seen from the following account:

> The few women (church members) founded their organisation as a lay apostolate group. Their main objective was to help themselves maintain the doctrine of the church. So they had fines for their members who were guilty of proved marital infidelity, fighting with their husbands or performing pagan practices, etc. They went round from house to house to pray for members. They spoke to pagans,... helped the poor and the aged... All their activities were subject to the approval of the men. There was no formal structure; no coordination of one station with another — just getting together to make things work.[30]

The reference to fines is reminiscent of traditional women's associations and their mode of calling dissidents to order. The need for men to give approval to women's decisions also shows to what extent women still took a secondary position in church affairs at the time. Finally, the absence of strong leaders and more permanent associations was one of the major obstacles to the development of strong women's associations in the church until the fifties and sixties.

Christian Mothers' Association and St Anne's Society

Despite the general picture painted above of Catholic women's associations, it must be pointed out that in the older parishes and especially the urban centres, more closely-knit associations of Catholic women were already being formed before the fifties. These were loosely called the Christian Mothers' Associations (CMA). The most notable and perhaps the first CMA was that of Holy Trinity Parish Onitsha — the oldest Catholic parish in the former Eastern Region of Nigeria. Here the CMA existed before 1945.[31] Members were drawn exclusively from the elderly Christian mothers who were looked upon to be mature and exemplary Christian mothers. Young newly married Christian mothers were not eligible for membership — probably due to their youth. The CMA undertook to clean the church premises every Monday morning. The members also decorated it on

ceremonial occasions. At the end of the Monday work they gathered together for associational prayers. They divided themselves into five working groups called Aka-olu. Each Aka-olu was headed by a woman after whom the working group was named. There was, for instance, Madam Anna Anyogu Aka-olu. Madam Anyogu was the mother of Rev. Father John Cross Anyogu – the first Catholic Igbo priest and, later, the first Catholic bishop of Enugu diocese. The CMA held meetings once a month – usually on a Monday. Its other activities included home visitation of sick or bereaved members, settling disputes among members or between Christian couples in the parish. It carried out the latter function in conjunction with some members of the parish church committee appointed by the parish priest. During the annual parish harvest and bazaar the CMA played very active part. Another important work of the CMA was the training of prospective brides. Almost each member of the CMA had two or more such young girls undergoing training in home management. The girls learnt the art of knitting and sewing, bread and cake-making, washing and ironing of clothes as well as cooking and house cleaning. Notable training homes included those of Madam Anna Anyogu, Madam Ojiba and Madam Lucy Iwuorah.

In 1945 a new association of Christian mothers was born in Holy Trinity Parish. This was St Anne's Society. The new society was founded by an Irish

missionary priest working in the parish. He was Father Stephen Cloonam. He gathered some forty young and newly married Catholic women and encouraged them to form an association similar to the CMA, which they could not join due to their youth. Father's objective was to train some young women who would take-over the work done by the CMA when most of its members would no longer be able to work for the parish due to old age. He named the new association after St Anne — the mother of Mary who was the mother of Jesus Christ.[32] The association grew in number and soon became popular among the younger Christian mothers. It closely imitated the CMA but held its meetings separately. Both the CMA and St Anne's Society soon spread to the inland parishes as more parishes were opened in the hinterland. St Anne's Society attracted the more educated women in the parishes. Some of the members were trained school teachers. The meetings were better organized and soon written prayers and songs were composed. One of the songs used during the association's devotional meetings and composed about 1952 ran thus in Igbo language:

Anna di aṣọ, onye obi ọma,
Nne nke onye bu ndu anyi,
Yọbal'anyi ayiyọ,
Yọbal'anyi ayiyọ;
Yọta ife n'akpa anyi.

Idi ngọzi n'etiti ikporo nine,
Ngọzi dili Anna di aṣọ.

Yọbal'anyi ayiyọ,
Yọbal'anyi ayiyọ;
Yọta ife n'akpa anyi.

(Translation)

Saint Anne, you're kind of heart;
Mother of the one who is our life-giver,
Intercede for us,
Intercede for us,
Intercede for our needs.

You're blessed amongst all women.
Blessed are you, St Anne,
Intercede for us,
Intercede for us,
Intercede for our needs.

Today this hymn has become the association's special anthem.

As the association spread in the parishes, a loose link was soon formed among the various branches but there was no written constitution or an executive until many years later. Members, however, wore a distinctive dress comprising a white blouse hung over light-blue woollen skirt with blue head-tie to match. Members of St Anne formed the nucleus of the Women's Wing of the ENCC. Today St Anne's Society has dwindled in membership and activity in parishes. This is largely due to the activity of the newly formed Catholic Women's Organisation (CWO) which will be discussed later below. Ironically its members are now drawn from the more elderly women in the parish,

unlike in the beginning when younger women dominated. Lamenting this development, a pioneer member of St Anne in Holy Trinity Parish said:

> People look on (sic) our members as old people – Ndi agadi. This discourages young women from entering. However, there are a few young women and widows who join us. Remember that once we are born, every year we go nearer to our grave. We must replace our old Christian people.[33]

Members of the society continue to give succour, comfort and companionship to one another, especially to those no longer able to participate actively in church affairs due to sickness or old age.

Catholic Women and UPE Crisis

The revolution in women's position in the Catholic Church came about by events which had their origin more outside the church than within it. These events centred around the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) by the Government of Eastern Nigeria in the fifties. The factors that led to this have been already dealt with in Chapter Four. Here we shall examine Catholic women's role during the UPE crisis and to what extent it led to the rise of a more militant movement within the church.[34]

When the Eastern Nigeria Catholic Council (ENCC) was formed in 1956, it was dominated by men.[35] No

woman held office in it, though women were members. The absence of women in leadership positions in the ENCC in the beginning partly reflects the usual traditional secondary and supportive role which women played in mixed associations of men and women.[36] It also shows that the Catholic Church had hitherto not taken definite steps to train women leaders. Nuns (whether native or foreign) were expected to fill the vacuum.[37] Protestant women, on the other hand, as was earlier mentioned, were more prone to assume leadership positions in their churches from the beginning. In this regard, it is perhaps significant to note that the woman who later became the first organizer (and then Director) of Catholic women's organisations on a very large scale in Onitsha Archdiocese is a convert from the Protestant Church. She is Madam Victoria Okoye.[38] While an Anglican member, Victoria underwent a special course in leadership and became an instructor in the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Leadership Training Centre in Onitsha. The following story of her first attendance at an ENCC meeting paints a graphic picture, as it were, of women's position in the ENCC before a special women's wing of it was formed in 1961.

> Following an announcement in the church on one occasion about a meeting of the ENCC at Onitsha, I decided to attend... At the meeting I noticed that only men sat at the table as officers. They alone dominated the discussion.

> Few women present appeared passive. So I raised up my hand and asked, 'Is this meeting for men only? Have women their own meeting?' The reply given to my question was not satisfactory...[39]

Women continued to work alongside with men in the ENCC until 1961 when they formed their own wing. The formation was due partly to the women's increasing desire to have their own separate meetings and the encouragement they got from the new chaplain of the ENCC, the Reverend Monsignor Michael Eneja (now the Bishop of Enugu). The President of the new association was Mrs. Cecilia Osadebe, a school teacher and member of St Anne's Society, and the Secretary was Mrs. Christiana Okolo.[40] The new association however did not involve all the women. Like the parent ENCC, only interested persons became members. Branches of it however began to spread. At Onitsha it had a large membership. The activities of the Women's Wing of the ENCC will be examined below.

Catholic Women's Protest Movements

As was said above and before the formation of the Women's Wing of the ENCC, it was from the various branches of St Anne's Society that most of the earliest and active Catholic women leaders in later years were drawn. They accompanied the men in the initial tours to alert Catholics on the UPE reforms and their

implications for the Church and society. Some of these women began to feel the need to mobilize women on a scale wider than the parish level. In Owerri the activities of Madam Catherine Ejiogu may be cited.[41] She began by inviting Catholic women to attend a meeting at Emekuku on 11 November 1956. At the meeting a decision was taken to reach out to all the areas of Owerri division in order to mobilize all the Catholic women. These women's effort soon spread to all the divisions in Owerri Province. It was said that "the women hired cars and drivers to reach distant hinterland areas and went by boat into the delta areas."[42] Similar mobilization took place in Onitsha Province. Here women leaders drawn from St Anne's Societies went from village to village, town to town, explaining to their fellow women the implications of the new UPE reforms. The leaders included Felicia Iwuorah, Cecilia Osadebe, Bridget Okwuosa and Anna Ogoegbunam. Their efforts at various levels and in different provinces in the Eastern Region gave rise to what was loosely called Catholic Eastern Women's Association (CEWA). Describing the association Nina Mba said,

> This... was an exclusively female organization formed on the initiative of the women themselves, and its control completely in the hands of its women leaders. There was no separate overall executive, but each division had its own executive committee and the divisional leaders met frequently.[43]

The CEWA had no new programme or manifesto but gave support to or reiterated the principles laid down by Catholic bishops and the ENCC, which basically were that parents had the right to choose the schools for their children, and that children should be given proper religious training in schools.

Each divisional group watched closely developments in education within its area. It was its duty to prevent what it considered unwanted changes in education. It registered its protest mainly by writing letters and sending telegrams of threat to the authorities concerned. In one of such letters by the Onitsha Northern District Catholic Women to the District Council officials, the Inspectors of Education and the Minister of Education, the women protested against discrimination against Catholics and favouritism to the Protestants with regard to allocation of school benefits. Their letter in part reads:

> We warn all Councillors that we will make much trouble for themselves and their families if they try to steal schools from us. We warn Minister of Education and (the European) Inspector of Education to keep their hands from our properties (sic),.. We who have registered Catholic (sic) will not take Council school tickets. We shall throw them back at foreigner Inspector (sic). We have many complaints against Minister of Education about his ill-treatment of us. He has given no money to Catholic schools. ... Minister of Education has given thousands and thousands and thousands pounds (sic) to CMS to build training colleges in the Onitsha Northern District area.... But Catholic Training colleges cannot receive one penny (sic)[45]

An obvious major cause of grievances among the Catholic women seems to have been the restriction placed on the number of children that could be admitted in the Voluntary agency schools by 1957 when the UPE programme would begin. This restriction must have hit Catholic women in particular more than other parents because most Catholic parents were reluctant to send their children to the new Local Authority schools (Council schools).[46] They generally resisted attempts by Ministry of Education officials to force them do so. A notable case at Onitsha may be cited. There, 433 children who registered in three Catholic schools in the town were declared "extra" by Local Council officials on the ground that the schools had exceeded their admission quota. According to the UPE Guidelines such children should seek admission elsewhere, especially in Council schools. In a letter from the Onitsha Urban District Council to the Catholic authorities, the Council regretted its inability to build within the time available seven new schools that would be required for the "extra" children. It therefore told the Catholic authorities that,

> In the circumstances the only course of action open to the Council is to approach you to enquire if your Mission will cooperate in the scheme by undertaking responsibility for the erection of additional schools as set out above... If your Mission is willing to undertake this I am to assure

> you that the Onitsha Urban District Council will give your Mission every encouragement to do so.[47]

In his reply on behalf of the Catholic Mission, the Diocesan Secretary, Rev. R. Daly, denied the Council's assertion that the children were "extra". He pointed out that there was accomodation for them in those Catholic schools where their parents had wanted them to be registered. Rev. Daly's letter in part read,

> I have to inform your Council that there is sufficient accomodation in existing Roman Catholic schools in Onitsha for all the children — "extra" or otherwise, — whose parents desire to have admitted to Catholic schools in January 1957. And these parents are aware of the fact that such accomodations exist.[48]

On 16 November 1956, the Catholic women of the four Catholic parishes in Onitsha jointly sent a note to the Onitsha Urban District Council, protesting strongly against allocating Catholic children to Council schools. They also accused the Council of discriminating against their children, leaving the Protestant children freer to choose schools. The women insisted that their children be taught by only Catholic teachers. The letter concluded with a justification of their demands on the basis that they paid taxes just like the men; and with a request for

equal treatment:

> We Christian mothers want our schools to be given equal grants with Council schools because under your new tax law, we women pay tax. If you do this, we assure you that there will be no obstacle to a complete understanding.[49]

There is evidence too that Catholic women probably did not limit their protests only locally. A report in the Bulletin de la Congrégation (the Holy Ghost Fathers' bulletin in Paris) indicated that the Catholic Eastern Women's Association decided to write protest letters or send telegrams to the Queen of England and the colonial authorities in Nigeria from 15 to 25 January, 1957 "pour demander le respect de leurs droits en matière d'education scolaire".[50] The women in many places followed their protest letters with threats of boycott of Council schools and National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC) candidates at the forthcoming elections in March 1957.[51] Some of the petitions presented to various government offices were sent by the women who numbered thousands but the demonstrations were generally peaceful.[52]

The Catholic women's actions in this regard had a considerable effect in making the government modify its education policy. To begin with, the Premier of the Region, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, quickly made a press statement in which, among other things, he allayed the fear by Catholics of freedom of religion.

He said "The Government of the Eastern Region is committed to the principle of religious freedom."[53] He promised that any apprehensions which the education policy or its implementation might cause would be removed through frank and cordial exchange of views between the Ministry of Education and representatives of Voluntary agencies, including representatives of the Roman Catholic Mission. The concessions included allowing Voluntary agency schools built not later than 31 December (and not May 31) 1956 to be eligible for grant-in-aid. Again, in February 1957 government announced that Voluntary agency schools could expand by an additional stream.

Towards an Autonomous Women's Organisation

The concessions encouraged the Catholic women to fight on but the nature of the struggle, especially its widening dimensions, made the Catholic women begin to realize the importance of having a stronger organisation on a larger scale. Thus the sixties saw moves by both the Church authorities and the women to have such an organisation. Although the initiative was taken by the ENCC when it founded the Women's Wing in 1961, it was the Church authorities that took decisive step to give Catholic women an almost autonomous existence. This was in 1963 when Mrs. Victoria Okoye returned from the USA, after undergoing

a special leadership course sponsored by the Women's African Committee of the African-American Institute. The ENCC which recommended Mrs. Okoye for the course was chagrined when, on her return, the Archbishop gave her a special assignment and virtually took her away from the direct control by the ENCC. Her new assignment was to reorganise all Catholic women's societies (including the ENCC Women's Wing) and possibly create new structures for the women - independent of the ENCC. The Archbishop also appointed two sisters to help and advise her. The result of her activities has been well summed up thus:

> After visiting about 200 women groups, discussing with them, a leadership seminar sponsored by His Grace, Most Rev. Dr. C. Heerey, CSSP was organized. Subsequently the Onitsha Archdiocesan Council of Women's Organisation was inaugurated on May 5, 1964 by the Archbishop.[54]

The movement soon spread to areas outside the Archdiocese of Onitsha, and in 1964 Mrs. Okoye became the organiser of the new organisation for the whole of Eastern Nigeria.

Rise of Opposition Forces

As would be expected, there was misunderstanding and considerable opposition from many quarters to the new organisation. The male-dominated ENCC saw the

changes as an attempt by the clergy to weaken it by creating an independent and autonomous women's organisation, whereas it had earlier set up the ENCC Women's Wing in 1961.[55] Mrs. Okoye recalls the mixed feelings of the ENCC members in these words:

> Many (ENCC leaders) accused me of trying to destroy the ENCC. Some ENCC leaders however were convinced I had still the interest of the ENCC at heart. But the misunderstanding cut rather deeply and caused me much pain.[56]

Similar opposition came from some existing women's associations which had been functioning at parish and local station levels and had enjoyed some degree of authority.[57] They at first resisted the new women's organisation which insisted that they be affiliated to it.[58] A further cause of conflict at the beginning of the formation of Mrs. Okoye's new organisation was the inclination of some of the older church women's associations to despise the new organisation which insisted on admitting any willing female church member into its fold, irrespective of her social and religious standing in the church. The older associations were more selective of members. The St. Anne's Society was one of the associations that frowned at the liberal policy of Mrs. Okoye's new organisation. As was said above, it is

one of the oldest Catholic women's associations. It claims to be the model of Catholic women's associations. Said Mrs. Okoye: "They despised our organisation which they said was made up of all sorts of persons – worthy and unworthy; good and bad.... Meanwhile we tried to explain our stand and objectives".[59]

These oppositions notwithstanding, the new Catholic women's organisation which was then called Onitsha Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women's Organisations (OACCWO) continued to grow stronger and stronger, incorporating existing associations but not eliminating them.[60] It enjoyed great support and encouragement from the clergy. Shortly after the death of Archbishop Charles Heerey in February 1967, who inspired and inaugurated the organisation in 1964, his successor, Most Rev. Dr. Francis Arinze, continued to give the organisation similar support. Addressing members of the OACCWO on 9 March 1967 Archbishop Arinze said:

> It is a source of happiness to know of your organisation and of your various activities. You are an organised group. In this organisation there is discipline. This discipline has as its motive Christian action and leadership. As followers of Christ we must be witnesses of Christ. A good Christian has a good influence on the family, group of friends or society in general. This is our prayer for you all: that the Onitsha Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women's Organisations may become stronger and stronger every day...[61]

Renewed UPE Crisis and the March 1964 Women's Demonstration

As was said above, the OACCWO did not eliminate or stifle existing Catholic women's associations. It gave them a new orientation. The existing associations continued to dominate and direct Catholic women's activities, especially in the pre-civil war years. In the renewed education crisis of 1964,[62] the dominant Catholic women's association was still the Women's Wing of the ENCC. The two main issues at stake at the time were Government's proposal in 1963 to reduce the primary school years to six and also to introduce a common religious syllabus in the schools in 1964. In addition to the above, the government reiterated its desire to stop further expansion of Voluntary agency schools while expanding only the Council schools. The women objected to all these. The first mass rally in protest against these changes which were announced in 1963 was at Onitsha. There in December, the ENCC organized a rally of parents. The people passed a six-point resolution, condemning the reduction of primary school course from eight to six years and calling on the Government to retrace its steps. Some of their demands were

1. that this august rally prays the Regional Government to abolish the Universal Free Primary Education forthwith and re-instate

the payment of school fees in some classes...

2. that the abolition of the Eight-year Course of the Primary Education, replaced with the Six-year Course, is not to the best interest of our children, and for this reason the old system of Eight-year Course should be reinstated;
3. that the running of all Primary schools be left in the hands of the Voluntary Agencies... and that they be allowed to open more schools in view of the increasing population of the children of school age.[63]

In February the following year, about 1,000 Catholic mothers in Port Harcourt marched to the Provincial Commissioner's Office protesting inadequate school facilities there and insisting that new Catholic schools be opened to accomodate their children. The women strongly protested against the arrangement of the Ministry of Education to send their children to other denominational schools where there were vacancies.[64] Meanwhile, in Onitsha, the Catholic women under the aegis of the ENCC Women's Wing, had been holding a series of meetings with women representatives from other dioceses in the Region.[65] The meetings were in connection with the proposed changes in education. Before holding a massive demonstration on March 24, 1964 at Enugu, they had made repeated but fruitless efforts through their delegates to get the Government halt the proposed changes. They therefore set a date

to go to Enugu en masse on a "peaceful" demonstration to register their objection to the new changes. This demonstration was the climax of their opposition to Government's changes in education. It will now be briefly examined.

The women interviewed gave a vivid description of their protest march at Enugu on 24 March, 1964. That day, hundreds of Catholic women from different parts of the Region began to arrive as planned at the premises of the Eastern House of Assembly. They came in lorry loads in the forenoon. As they alighted from the lorries, members of the House of Assembly were also filing into the House for the day's session. The women leaders made sure each woman picked up a piece of palm leaf or blade of grass and held it between her lips to indicate the "peaceful" nature of their protest.[66] Within hours of their arrival, the whole Assembly ground was filled with women.[67] At about mid-day the Speaker of the House of Assembly, Mr. Okereke, came out, flanked by two policemen. He approached the women and asked for their leaders. As the dialogue continued, the women said they saw squads of anti-riot policemen slowly surrounding them. As one woman leader put it,

> We did not run, since our mission was a peaceful one. But we noticed that each policeman held something in his hand. We did not know what it was till we heard some women shrieking in pains and shouting "Tear gas" and dispersing.[68]

Later in the day, nine of the women were arrested by the police, charged in court but later discharged and acquitted.[69] The dialogue with the Speaker of the House earlier on did not make a head-way any more partly because of the tear gas incident and because the women leaders insisted on seeing the Premier himself for whom they had prepared a special protest note. The note contained many points of grievances and demands similar to those made in the December rally at Onitsha. It condemned what the women described as the plan by the Minister of Education, Dr. S.E. Imoke, to force Catholic mothers to send their children to Council schools; it also condemned the proposed "common religious syllabus" for the primary schools as well as the six-year primary school course. It concluded with the following three-point demand:

i Catholic schools should be allowed to expand to cater for our children...

ii The Common religious syllabus must go. We do not want it.

iii Let the eight-year primary period be reintroduced. We do not want our children to pass through school and yet remain illiterates.[70]

There were twenty signatories to the petition, each representing one of the different areas from which the women had come. The action of the women had

one immediate result. In the words of Amucheazi, "for once the church had been able to stop a bill from passing through the legislature".[71] The Government dropped the proposal to introduce a common religious syllabus but it did not lift the ban on Voluntary agency school construction and expansion nor did it go back on the eight-year primary school course.[72] For the women the demonstration remained evergreen in their minds. They even tried to immortalise it by composing a special song, narrating the episode. It was titled Ije Enugu 1964 (The Enugu 1964 March). To this day Catholic women still refer to it as an impetus to challenge any Government's unpopular education reform.

Meanwhile, the protest march had provoked bitter comments both in the House of Assembly and in the press. A wellknown woman legislator, Mrs. Margaret Ekpo, was reported to have condemned the women's demonstration in a speech in the House. She said, "It is very bad for people to use women of this region in achieving their objectives."[73] This criticism provoked an angry rejoinder from the Catholic women. Speaking on their behalf, Mrs. M.C. Chikwendu, the Assistant Secretary of the ENCC Women's Wing in Onitsha, justified the women's action and denounced Mrs. Ekpo for what she considered as her lack of understanding and sympathy for the women's cause:

> Let Hon. Mrs. Ekpo know that the women she saw in front of the Eastern House have a right to criticize the Government at anytime when they deny parents their right to choose schools for education of their children, because it is the parents' divine right.
>
> Was it not shameful for Mrs. Ekpo not to sympathise with her fellow women when their inalienable right are (sic) being denied them? Was it not painful for Mrs. Ekpo to see her fellow women, some of them pregnant, some old and some with children, being subjected to the horrors of tear gas?[74]

Those who opposed church participation in education saw the incident as an occasion to call for complete state take-over of all schools in the country. One of them, Tai Solarin, in a vitriolic article entitled "Who should educate the Nigerian child?", denounced Mission schools as narrow in outlook and divisive of a country's citizens:

> We are a country of many nations today because of our hydra-headed church and mosque dominated school system. Our political obfuscation today has been, and is being dictated by the silent whispers into the ears of our children during the hours they were supposed to be doing academic work.[75]

The debate, tensions, and conflicts over which school system was to be adopted in Eastern Nigeria continued in 1965 and 1966, with the Government seeking ways and means to check the growing influence of the

Voluntary agencies (especially the Catholic Mission) in schools. The Women's Wing of the ENCC and the parent body kept increasing vigilance over such moves by the Government, or by any group which supports secularisation of education.[76] No major changes were however made before the outbreak of the Nigerian civil war in 1967.

CHAPTER SIX

THE LAITY AFTER 1970: THEIR CHANGING ROLE

The year 1970 marked the beginning of major changes in the contribution of Catholic laity to church growth. The end of Nigeria's civil war[1] was followed almost immediately by the compulsory take-over of all primary schools, including the voluntary agency schools, by the Government of the former East-Central State of Nigeria, headed by Ukpabi Asika.[2] The year also witnessed the mass repatriation of expatriate Catholic missionaries from the former Republic of Biafra by the Federal Military Government of Nigeria. These events had a considerable impact on Catholic Church life.

To begin with, many southerners, especially people of Eastern Nigeria living in the other parts of Nigeria, especially the north, returned en masse to their region, following the political and social unrest in parts of the country in 1966 and 1967. It is not clear how many people actually returned but a conservative estimate put the figure at about one million from the north alone and about half a million from the other regions.[3] These returnees swelled the already over-populated Igbo towns and villages. Among them were teachers, catechists and many lay men and women church-leaders. During the civil war itself there was a mass dislocation of people who were refugees

fleeing from the war zones to places of safety in the fast-dwindling Biafran enclave. Since available priests during the war were not evenly distributed, lay volunteers – both men and women, contributed much in many places by not only helping to provide food and medicare to thousands of war-refugees housed in various abandoned buildings and makeshift camps called feeding centres and in sick-bays, but also providing a skeletal pastoral ministry to the people. An example of the large number of persons catered for in most parishes can be seen from the following figures given for Nnokwa parish (in Onitsha Archdiocese) – a parish which is by no means a large parish, having only three component towns by October 1968.[4]

TABLE 10: NNOKWA REFUGEES AND RELIEF PATIENTS[5]

Towns	Refugees in Camp	Non-camped Refugees	Kwashiokor Patients	Incipient Kwashiokor Patients
Alor	2,546	764	1,893	1,000
Awka-Etiti	1,577	647	1,014	(approx.)
Nnokwa	704	264	1,293	
TOTAL	4,827	1,675	4,200	1,000

The experience these lay volunteers gained helped them to develop the spirit of self-help and independence. This undoubtedly prepared them for the immediate post-war

era when the population increased but the number of the clergy and religious dwindled, following the immediate repatriation of expatriate missionaries in 1970.[6] The following figures show the extent of the dearth of expatriate missionaries in Onitsha Archdiocese shortly after the civil war.

TABLE 11: ARCHDIOCESE OF ONITSHA 1967[7]

No. of Parishes	36
No. of expatriate Priests	73
No. of " Sisters	29
No. of " Brothers	5
No. of indigenous Priests	16
No. of " Sisters	11
No. of " Brothers	-
Total Catholic Population	317,103

TABLE 12: ARCHDIOCESE OF ONITSHA 1970[8]

No. of Parishes	36
No. of expatriate Priests	-
No. of " Sisters	-
No. of " Brothers	-
No. of indigenous Priests	54
No. of " Sisters	56
No. of " Brothers	11
Total Catholic Population	391,025

Whereas there were about 73 expatriate priests and 16 indigenous priests working in 36 parishes in the Archdiocese of Onitsha shortly before the civil war, there were at the end of the war only 54 priests — all indigenous, working in the same number of

parishes but with increased population.

The Government take-over of all schools, including Catholic schools, in 1970 worsened the situation, especially with regard to church personnel engaged in teaching in schools. The Edict automatically made all former Catholic teachers no longer mission employees but the State's. The immediate effect of this was that the Church for the first time could no longer lay hold legally of thousands of Catholic teachers teaching in her former schools.[9] Henceforth, she depended largely on their goodwill to get them to teach Catholic religion in schools. This new dimension which the take-over of schools gave to the status of teachers is one of the major aspects of the new education policy which the Catholic bishops bitterly criticised in their condemnation of government total control of education in the State. The bishops lamented that the new system could no longer guarantee the provision of the right teachers to teach children in school the religion of their parents. The bishops argued that

> The ideal arrangement ... is that which guarantees the unity of the home and the school in religious matters. This means that the teachers in each school are best chosen from among those who have the same religious persuasion as the parents ... It follows therefore that any attempt to deliberately disregard the religious affiliations of teachers is bound to kill the religious character of a school.[10]

The new education policy made the Government the sole employer of teachers. She alone henceforth deploys them and to any school, irrespective of its former religious denominational character. Many teachers seemed to have welcomed the new system of education. A random survey made by this writer in 1982 on the reaction of teachers to government take-over of schools shows that at least about 62% of teachers were strongly in favour of state control and management of schools.[11] Their main reason was that, under a complete state system of education, teachers enjoyed conditions of service more comparable to those of civil servants than under Voluntary Agency management. An example may perhaps show better the mood of many teachers as regards their conditions of service under state-managed education. In the survey referred to above the teachers were asked the following question: "Which of the following groups gained most by the take-over of school by the Government and why? (a) The Government; (b) The Missions; (c) Parents; (d) Pupils; (e) Teachers." A teacher who has taught for over 28 years (20 of which were under Mission management) answered:

> Teachers gained most. Teachers have enjoyed improved conditions of service and do not have to wait for months before they are paid. As a matter of fact, some voluntary agencies were unable to pay their teachers regularly. They (teachers) now enjoy much freedom and are no longer subjected to strict mission discipline.

The attitude of teachers since the take-over of mission schools greatly influenced the Church's line of action in her school apostolate and ordinary life after 1970.

Reorganisation of the Catechist System

One of the immediate positive results of the changes in the State management and control of schools which began in 1970 was a reorganisation of the catechist system in the church. Catechists gained in status in the church. Whereas in the past, once a person became a school teacher in a mission school he generally assumed the duties of a catechist, in the new education system it was no longer so. Indeed many teachers who hitherto worked as catechists in addition to teaching in schools ceased to work as mission catechists of their own volition, and possibly as a sign of their opposition to the old system under the mission. Consequently, the Church witnessed for the first time an acute shortage of catechists in many places. She was forced to embark for the first time on a massive recruitment of catechists, especially those who would devote full-time to the work of catechists. A random survey of about 118 catechists working in Onitsha Archdiocese in 1982 showed that over 90% of them became catechists after 1970.[12] The survey further revealed that of those who were already catechists before 1970 the majority were teachers

and catechists at the same time. Therefore, whereas in the past, when the Church owned and managed schools, emphasis was on deploying serving teachers to work also as catechists, after 1970, that is with the take-over of mission schools, the Church concentrated more on recruiting catechists, especially full-time catechists.

The increased need for such catechists immediately after the civil war made the Church also embark on their training and improve their conditions of service. Before 1970 many catechists received little or nothing as remuneration for their work. They were supposed to live on their salaries as school teachers. Because teachers under the new state system of education enjoyed greater stability, enhanced status and more freedom than under the mission, as in the past, the Church was compelled to start paying the catechists and other church workers. A commission headed by Rev. Monsignor F. Ugwueze (the Ugwueze Commission) was appointed to work out equitable wages for them.[13] An interim remuneration of ₦72.00 and ₦240.00 a year was approved for the part-time and full-time catechists respectively. This was later doubled. It was in July 1977 that the Church for the first time approved a uniform scale of salary for all her lay workers. For catechists, the point of entry depended on successful completion of each of three courses designed for the training of catechists. The figures below show the

new scale as far as full-time catechists were concerned.

TABLE 13: SCALE OF SALARY FOR FULL-TIME CATECHISTS[14]

1.	For Elementary Six Pass with/without other Qualification	
	Rural Catechist	Urban Catechist
	₦840 x 24 for 5 years	₦900 x 24 for 5 years
2.	After One Successful Catechists' Course	
	₦1,020 x 30 for 4 years	₦1,092 x 30 for 4 years
	₦1,200 x 36 for 3 years	₦1,248 x 36 for 3 years
3.	After Three Successful Catechists' Course	
	₦1,260 x 36 for 3 years	₦1,296 x 36 for 3 years
	₦1,416 x 42 for 2 years	₦1,452 x 42 for 2 years

Fringe benefits were also approved. They included a monthly allowance of ₦7.00 for one child of a full-time catechist who has up to four children.

Though the new wages and fringe benefits did not compare favourably with the conditions of service in the state civil service at the time,[15] they were for the catechists and other church workers revolutionary. For the first time they drew public attention to the plight of lay Church-workers. The catechists themselves were encouraged more than ever before to state their case boldly for public hearing. In a memorandum to Archdiocesan Pastoral Council[16] four years after the publication of the new scale of salaries, the

Association of Catechists of the Archdiocese of Onitsha made a lengthy plea for further improvement on their wages. Part of it reads,

> We have not been used to complaining over this issue of salary structure and payment, for we still maintain that our reward is great in heaven, but the rising condition of living in this country has forced us to bear it no more, lest one may be in danger of losing both the little happiness of this world and the great reward in heaven...[17]

The association, among other things, condemned the uneven implementation of the scale of salary, the relatively low wages, when the minimum wage in the civil service had risen from ₦720.00 to ₦1,500.00 per annum. The catechists also condemned the improper grading of catechists who had successfully completed their training programme. This, they argued, had forced some of them to quit their job. Finally, the association condemned the irregular payment of wages to catechists in some places. As a remedy it called for the centralisation of the appointment and payment of catechists:

> We suggest that there be a standard method of employment, record of service of every catechist so employed in the parish. We also suggest that the payment of salary and fringe benefits be centralized and harmonized; but if continued in parishes, reports of payments should be compulsorily sent to the Secretariat quarterly or half-yearly.[18]

The issue of irregular or non-payment of the recommended wages to some catechists is a thorny one indeed. It is one of the main effects of the new scale of salaries. Some poor parishes, especially parishes in riverine areas, could not afford to pay the new scale. According to the Director of Catechetics in Onitsha Archdiocese, Reverend Father G.C. Ikeobi, the percentage of those not paid regularly was higher (40%) for part-time catechists than for full-time catechists and embarrassed Church authorities at the headquarters who had to raise funds elsewhere to make up for the shortfall. There were cases where non-payment of salary was due not so much to lack of funds as to other reasons. Some local church committee men are known to have taken an uncompromising stand over the payment of catechists' salaries due to the local politics of the areas in which catechists, being natives, got personally involved. As one aggrieved catechist bluntly put it,

> The church committees (sic) could not pay monthly the agreed amount. The money was there. Hardly (did) they favour me in kind (sic) by means of foodstuff. I find it hard to make ends meet.[19]

It is clear that the changes being made in the conditions of service for church workers enabled the catechists to form a kind of pressure group for further demands. The catechists were further strengthened by the formation of a directorate for

their training and the appointment of a full-time Director of Catechetics in 1974.[20] An institute called a Pastoral Centre was also opened in the same year. It became the training centre for catechists. It also serves as a place for seminars, workshops, meetings, retreats and general animation of the mission of the church in the Archdiocese. Catechists for the first time got a uniformed dress.[21] They saw the dress as a visible manifestation and recognition of their new status by the church. In the words of one catechist,

> The uniform worn by catechists now brought a big change than in the past. They (the catechists) are now known outside by the people with their uniform (sic) both in the church or at any function.[22]

If the uniform gives the catechist pride of place and identity before the Christian assembly, the formal training he now gets in the various disciplines in the church gives him undoubtedly greater self-confidence in his key work of teaching the Christian doctrine to the people. Catechists began to undergo courses in Dogmatic Theology, Moral Theology, Liturgy, Apologetics, Pedagogy, Leadership, Sacred Music, Accountancy, African Traditional Religion and Community Development. These courses are supplemented with seminars and retreats lasting for days every year. The catechists' courses take place yearly and generally last for only six weeks, usually in July and August,

when senior seminarians who are the principal teachers are on apostolic apprenticeship. Speaking about some of the major problems encountered in their training programme, the Director of Catechetics said,

> These courses should be a permanent, ongoing affair but for (lack of) funds and teaching staff. We depend on the Major Seminary for instructors and that is possible only once a year.[23]

Though still inadequately trained, the catechist now feels he is better equipped for his work than his counterpart in the past. In the words of a catechist,

> In the past the work of a catechist was limited to only teaching of catechism and preparation of people for confession ... Today he does everything except the administration of sacraments.[24]

Although the catechist has now got improved knowledge and skill for his work, ironically pressure of work on him today is somehow less than in the past. With the increase in the number of native priests and seminarians since the mid-seventies[25] and with the general increase in the level of knowledge of Christians fewer people go to him for assistance. The native priest does not require his service as an interpreter any longer as would the expatriate priest. The people themselves do not need him in this regard to some extent too. When possible they would present their problems direct to the priest. The catechist therefore finds himself to be more and more confined to purely administrative and clerical work in the parish.

As to his primary function of teaching catechism, there are now other lay volunteers who teach catechism mainly out of school. Members are drawn from such newly-formed lay organisations as the Bible Society and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement.[26] In some towns there has sprung up recently associations of lay men and women whose main duty is to teach the Christian doctrine outside the schools (and sometimes in the schools), following government take-over of schools. One notable association was the Obi Nwagbala Catechetical Centre in Nnewi.[27] Members who were drawn from the local community gathered every Wednesday in the premises of Mr. Nwagbala (whence the name Obi Nwagbala), where they were instructed on various aspects of the Catholic doctrine by the parish priest and founder, Father Godwin Ikeobi. The rest of the week, until their next meeting, they went to parts of the parish to teach others what they had learnt. Their work proved very effective and soon similar associations sprang up in other towns and parishes in the Archdiocese.

The foregoing notwithstanding, it would be misleading to think that the mission catechist has no more importance in the local church. He remains the permanent link between the priest and the community. Being more often than not an indigene of the place and working there, he usually has more knowledge of the people than the priest who is generally not an indigene.

The priest would now and again consult him on matters of pastoral interest in the town. There is, therefore, some truth in the following apologia which a priest makes for catechists:

> The priests no longer need us (catechists) as interpreters: many times they have to consult us for instructions about what to do – especially when catechists become incumbents while priests come and go. Many times the catechists have to brief the priests on the communities and how they react to priests and the faith – in language we all share and understand.[28]

So the catechist remains relevant to the local church, despite the changing times. The case of other church lay members will now be examined.

Reorganisation of the Laity

As we pointed out earlier in this chapter, the school question was one of the major preoccupations for the Church since the end of the civil war in 1970. Whereas the Church tried to solve the problem of lack of teachers of catechism by employing more full-time catechists and men and women lay volunteers, she did not give up her demand for the return of mission schools which the Government had taken over. For almost a decade since the take-over the fight for the return of schools was done mainly by the church hierarchy alone.[29] The laity was virtually passive.

This passivity can be attributed to a number of reasons. First and, perhaps, foremost was the effect of the civil war. The war left many people disorganised and disorientated. At the end of the war many people lost their means of livelihood. Those who fled from their homes returned to face the task of reconstruction and rehabilitation. In the words of a Catholic woman leader and activist, "The Catholic women could do little during the army regime, particularly in our area, where people were more concerned with consolidation after the sufferings of the civil war."[30] Fear of the army was another factor. Most people in the former Biafran enclave were gripped with fear of possible reprisals by the soldiers many of whom were quartered after the war in the midst of the people, should they protest against the take-over of schools.[31] There was also the belief by some sections of the Catholic laity that the steps being taken by the bishops to get back mission schools would succeed. Indeed, in their petition to the Governor of Imo State of Nigeria, following the return to civil rule in Nigeria in 1979, the Catholic women recalled this belief:

> When the schools were taken over by the Government after the war, we thought that the best approach would be what we popularly call "big man talk to big man". Our bishops made serious attempts on our behalf to rescue our schools...

> All through the military regime, they have sought for meaningful dialogue with the Government without success.[32]

Furthermore, people believed that the military regime, being an interregnum, would not last long, and therefore any protest could as well wait until civilian rule. Besides, the rapid expansion of schools and reintroduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) by the Military Government,[33] coupled with the long period during which the new system of public schools had actually functioned, weakened opposition by some people to the new system and won for it some support. This factor of the relatively long period during which a complete public system of education was operated in parts of the former Eastern Region of Nigeria is very important in any correct assessment of people's response to the State take-over of schools. Many parents and pupils were attracted by the prospect of free education and the increased number of schools. Teachers, as we said above, seemed to have rejoiced at the change. These are some of what one may call the major external reasons why the Catholic laity did little or nothing for about a decade to challenge the take-over of schools by the State in 1970. The argument sometimes raised that the lack of any significant opposition by the laity was because "the missions had not actually succeeded in building up an organic link

between them and indigenous society at large,"[34] cannot stand if one considers the activities of the Catholic laity both during the pre-civil War UPE crisis and during the civilian regime (1979-1983). It is on the same consideration one rejects Hastings' contention that a common philosophy about educational development was shared by the church and government and that this largely accounted for the rather little friction between church and state in the matter of take-over of church schools.[35]

Internal Reasons for laity Apathy

Besides the external reasons already examined, there are some internal reasons for the apathy of the laity. To begin with, it can be attributed to a radical reorganisation of lay associations in the Church at the end of the civil war in parts of the former Eastern Nigeria. The former Eastern Nigeria Catholic Council (ENCC) gave way in 1971 to a new laity council – the Archdiocesan Lay Apostolate Council (ALAC).[36] Unlike the ENCC, the new council was limited in area of operation. It operated only within the Archdiocese of Onitsha, but it was affiliated to what was called the National Laity Council of Nigeria.[37] It was composed of representatives of existing Catholic lay apostolate organisations which functioned up to the archdiocesan level. They included Knights of St Mulumba, Catholic Youth League,

Catechists' Association, Catholic Teachers' Association, Catholic Professionals, Catholic Women's Organisation, among many others. A branch of the ALAC was formed in each parish or local church, and was presided over by a lay man appointed by the parish priest. The manner of the council's composition was one of its inherent weaknesses. The council, being merely a coordinating body, did not enjoy the loyalty of the composite organisations, some of which acted sometimes without due reference to it. It also lacked funds for its operation. Above all, the existence of parish councils (in parishes) and the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (at the archdiocesan centre) made the various lay apostolate councils almost redundant.[38] Major decisions in the parishes were taken by these councils and the meetings were usually presided over by parish priests. There was there a general feeling among some people that parish councils' decisions were over-influenced by the clergy.

Another serious criticism of both the lay apostolate councils and parish councils was that they lacked the dynamism and militancy of former church councils, such as the defunct ENCC. Some former leaders of the ENCC did not play an active part in the new organisation because of that. Giving reasons for not participating actively in the new councils, the former President of the ENCC said:

I myself withdrew from active

> participation in the new laity councils because I felt that the new spirit does not coincide with the virile movement that was the ENCC. To me the new leaders don't seem to be ready for the militant front which characterized the ENCC in the pre-war years.[39]

Despite the above criticisms the new lay apostolate and parish councils had some positive values. Due to their three year life span and the rule that a member should not serve for more than two terms consecutively, more people are afforded the opportunity of participating. Pre-civil war lay councils were very often monopolized by a few powerful men in the local church. The reorganisation enabled women for the first time to become members of councils which governed the local church. They also became church wardens and choirmasters — functions which hitherto men monopolized. The new leadership role now undertaken by women in the church was made possible largely because of enlightenment and leadership seminars women began to organize for themselves shortly before the civil war and after the war.[40] Again, the new councils allowed more people to be involved in discussions because council members generally carried topics for discussion first to their various church wards and village meetings for deliberation, thereby creating greater awareness of the issues and pastoral problems. This situation applies more to the parish councils than to the lay

apostolate councils – the former having more grassroots representation than the latter. Nevertheless, some lay organisations gained strength with time. A good example is the Catholic Women's Organisation (CWO).

Catholic Women's Renewed Militancy

As was said earlier, the laity as a whole did not involve itself in any major activity in the first decade after the civil war. Most of the various lay associations were preoccupied with reorganisation and rehabilitation. Reorganisation of the women was quicker. As was said above, through a series of leadership seminars, the women quickly regrouped and became highly revitalized and motivated. At such seminars inspiring words such as the following by Archbishop Francis Arinze were said to the women:

> In order that your organization may be ever alive and ever active, it will be useful to cultivate the good practice of setting yourselves some apostolic objectives when you meet at each level... Examples of apostolic objectives are positive action in the family, or village... projects to help the aged, the sick and unemployed.[41]

On another occasion in 1979 Madam Victoria Okoye, the Director of Catholic Women's Organization (CWO), openly called on women not only to organize more seminars and study sessions in their parishes, zones and stations but to act as village catechists. In her

own words, "Let us resolve to become zone or village catechists who will bring Christ at the doorsteps of every family. We can do it if we are determined".[42] As a matter of fact some Catholic women began to visit the primary and secondary schools in Onitsha Archdiocese to teach Catholic Christian doctrine to the pupils on Thursday in an effort to fill the gap created by shortage of Catholic teachers willing to do so due to the take-over of schools by the government.[43]

To better train the women, more full-time organizers were appointed for the zones.[44] In addition, there were the following officials: a Director, four Sister-Advisers, a priest-Spiritual Director and some lay consultants for educational and economic matters. To create a feeling of oneness the women designed a uniformed dress for themselves to more easily identify one another. The dress consisted of a blue wrapper and white blouse with blue head-tie to match. The Anglican Church women in probable imitation of Catholic women also designed a uniform for themselves.

To help rehabilitate its members the Catholic Women's Organisation expanded its wartime aid programme by establishing such projects as bread-making in Adazi, garri-making in Nnewi and Agulu, and rearing of sheep and goats in Adazienu. The last scheme involved the purchase of goats and sheep which were given to poorer members of the organisation to rear.

The offspring is shared between the organisation and the women concerned on a fifty-fifty basis in accordance with the local custom on lifestock sharing. In 1973, the CWO began to send food weekly to the diocesan minor seminary for the feeding of the seminarians.[45] In 1976, the organisation embarked on one of its greatest projects – the building of a Leadership Training Centre and Hostel. The hostel, named Bethany House, was completed in 1984 at the cost of about one million naira.[46]

The developments taking place in Onitsha Archdiocese among the women soon spread to the other dioceses in the former Eastern Region. Catholic women leaders from the then nine dioceses of Eastern Region of Nigeria had earlier met in Port Harcourt on 4th December 1971 and revived the Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province Council of Catholic Women's Organisation.[47] They elected new officers which included the following – Mrs. P. Ellah (President), Mrs. H. Peters and later Miss C.N. Obiamiwe (Secretary General) and Mrs. V.V.I. Okoye (Director). They held their first post-war Provincial Seminar at Enugu from 2nd to 5th January, 1975.[48] Thus with such a strong link and union and with a large number of members, Catholic women easily became the first lay group to lend its weight and support to the bishops on the vexed school question.

Following the return of the country to civil rule in October 1979 the Catholic women began to make serious efforts to put pressure on the Government to reverse its decision on the school take-over.[49] The women leaders mapped out various strategies for action. The first was enlightenment campaign and fact-finding tours. This consisted of visits to various stations, parishes and zones of the CWO where the women deliberated on the advantages and disadvantages of the school take-over. At the end, each station, parish and zone made resolutions which were recorded, asking for the return of mission schools. On the strength of these resolutions the women met at diocesan levels and further renewed such resolutions, and planned new strategies. One of such strategies was an appeal to various interest groups, like teachers, to win their goodwill and support. Among the special categories of teachers the women approached were female teachers. Narrating their technique a woman leader and activist said,

> Catholic women teachers were rallied in four state headquarters. We spoke to them on our moves, explaining the necessity. In all the states the Catholic lady teachers saw with us and gave us the mandate that they are ready to teach in Catholic schools, provided their salaries and benefits are not tampered with.
> [50]

At the end of such rallies with the Catholic teachers resolutions were again passed, asking for a return of schools to the missions.

The effort to win over the teachers to their cause was a major thrust in the women's campaigns. Characteristically too, those who tended to defend vehemently the state take-over of schools point to the improved welfare of teachers as one of the greatest merits of the new education system. Thus, fifteen years after the take-over of schools an Editorial in the government newspaper said in defence of it,

> Returning schools to the missions at this time in our development and history can be said to be a retrogressive step... They (the missions) exploited and enslaved the teachers. Teachers in mission-controlled or voluntary agency schools had the worst experience. They were never sure of their salaries, and often their reward could be had in heaven, which means they would reap such reward after death.
> [51]

The women therefore cajoled as well as threatened the teachers. They warned the association of teachers — the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) not to place obstacles to the return of schools to the missions.[52] They however assured the NUT of their maximum cooperation in seeing to teachers' welfare in church-controlled schools. The issue of teachers' welfare is worth emphasizing. Catholic teachers themselves, whilst supporting the return of schools to the

missions, invariably stressed the case for teachers' welfare as paramount in any negotiation. In a memorandum to the bishops, the Association of Catholic Teachers of Anambra and Imo States rejected the idea of schools being under the control of the clergy alone as in the past. They further demanded that Government be responsible for teachers' salary and promotion.[53] In another public declaration of their stand on the handover of schools members of the association in Onitsha Archdiocese supported a return of the schools but called on

> all teachers to go into dialogue with the Government and the Church to ensure that the handover does not in any way, whether now or in the future, bring about a reduction in the present service conditions of teachers in the State, but will make provisions for progressively regular improvements in them.[54]

In other words, for the teachers the handover should not mean a complete return to the status quo before 1970.

Emboldened by their gains at the different levels in the fight to return schools to the missions, the CWO decided to take the matter to the highest authority in the states. About eighty of its leaders drawn from all the dioceses in Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province went to the Governors of Imo and Anambra States – two states which are foremost in championing state ownership and management of schools in Nigeria.[55]

In their petition of October 1981 to both Governors the women spoke out strongly against any act of "sabotage" by the NUT. While addressing Governor Nwobodo of Anambra State the women said,

> Your Excellency, both yourself and your Imo State counterpart have same fears about handing back schools to the Church despite your declared commitment to this cause — the Nigerian Union of Teachers (sic). We have made extensive consultations among the teachers and we wish to repeat what we already told His Excellency, Chief Sam Mbakwe: "We know that the NUT does not run the Government of this country and that the NUT cannot have the final say in the ownership of schools not built by them. It is the privilege of any member of the NUT to refuse to teach in any Church school, but it has neither the right nor the privilege to forbid any body from teaching in such schools..."[56]

The women also made a passionate plea regarding the almost total absence of "serious" religious education in schools and called for a change:

> Your Excellency, our children are being educated away from our religion and are therefore being alienated from us. The schools should help us in the education of our children. Instead of doing that, they are alienating them from us. They are no longer our children; they are rather "school's children", may God forbid. In fact, at times we get the impression that the school is making fun of our religion.

The petition ended with a four-point demand which included the return of Catholic schools to the Church

and the provision of better and more meaningful religious education in all schools. It is to be noted that Catholic militancy in the post-civil war era in Eastern Nigeria since the schools were de facto taken over by the Government shows less confrontation with other Christian denominations, as was the case before the civil war and take-over of schools. Emphasis seems to be placed now on fighting the growth of secularism in schools than on religious rivalry. As one Catholic woman activist put it,

> Now there is no more direct confrontation between us and the CMS. There is spirit of ecumenism... Some of the Protestant women leaders even seem to admire the fight we are putting on to restore order and sanity to the schools. They realise that the take-over of schools by the Government hasn't done people much good.[57]

Among the Protestant churches the Presbyterians and Methodists are vocal in their condemnation of government monopoly over the control of schools. Dr Akanu Ibiam, a wellknown Presbyterian Church leader, blamed the low moral standard in schools on the denial of churches a place in the management of schools since 1970.[58]

Women's activities at this time are significant in many other ways than they were in the past. There are more educated leaders. Before the civil war many educated women did not identify themselves with the CWO. The organisers were not highly literate. Indeed their leader, Mrs. V.V.I, Okoye was then a Grade Three school teacher whilst most of

the others had only the First School Leaving Certificate. Regarding the attitude of educated women to the CWO in the past, Mrs. Okoye lamented:

> My relationship with the women elite and professionals was not a happy one, especially at the beginning. When this organisation started, some people derisively called it the society of illiterate women. You know, at first, when I began to rally the women, I was only a Grade Three school teacher. The first well-educated woman to join us is Mrs. Agnes Nwagbogu... After a while educated women like school headmistresses began to join us.[59]

With more enlightenment seminars organised at different zones, parishes and stations, there has been greater awareness at the grassroots level among the women, and reactions to crucial issues are no longer sporadic, as in the past, but orderly, reasoned and better coordinated from the lowest level to the highest. For instance, the attempt by the Federal Government to legalize abortion in 1981 failed largely because of strong resistance mounted by the women at all levels. Their leaders had earlier on organized enlightenment tours and lectures on its adverse implications for the nation. In Owerri, the Imo State capital, Catholic women organized protest marches along the Streets. In Enugu the women spread leaflets on the Streets condemning the Abortion Bill.[60] Although the campaign to return schools to the missions was not a complete success, the Government of Anambra State

agreed on certain modifications. The most significant was the return of some teacher training colleges to the missions for management.[61] The return of the country to military rule in December 1983 disrupted the women's activities on the school question.[62]

Children's Apostolate – The Block Rosary Crusade

Although the Catholic Church – both her clergy and laity – regarded the school question as crucial to her existence because of its use as means of evangelisation, and therefore never relented her struggle to regain the schools, there were developments in other areas, very little known at first but which came to draw the attention of church leaders only lately because of their potentialities as alternative means of evangelisation, especially of the young. The best known of them today is a movement which came to be widely called the Block Rosary Crusade.[63]

Like many movements before their crystallization, the exact origin of the Block Rosary is not very certain.[64] In Onitsha where the movement is now very widespread, the origin is attributed to the association of store boys (shop-keepers) who also guarded their masters' stores and shops at night in and around the market places. At night, these boys began the practice of meeting in front of one shop or another along the streets, or market places where they organized group night prayers as well as kept one another company in

the night. The core of the prayers said was the rosary (chaplet) and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This practice began before the civil war in Nigeria (1967-1970).[65] During the war the need for prayers was more sharply felt, but such organized prayers were not easily held. Also after the war it was not possible immediately to revive these store-boys' or shop attendants' prayer assemblies because of the disruption of life and trade. Instead such prayers were begun to be re-organized in wards or groups of adjacent streets and houses. They were called the Block Rosary – a name derived probably from the Blocks of adjacent houses from where most of the participants usually came. Being said nearer residential areas it became possible for more people, especially children, to join the prayers. With time, enthusiasm and support, especially from children of almost all ages, the movement spread to other towns and villages around. A similar phenomenon probably took place independently in Aba, a town some 136 kilometres southeast of Onitsha.[66] Today many towns have as many as 20 to 40 prayer centres with more than forty members in each! What is certain about its origin however is that it did not arise from any special direction or inspiration of the clergy. It was the laity who began it all and it has remained largely to this day a non-clerical movement.[67]

The movement is significant for many other reasons. It specially appeals to children. They play a leading role in the conduct of it. The prayers are usually led by three children - a boy and two girls - probably in imitation of the three children in the story of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal.[68] These wear a distinct dress. The chaplet is recited by all. Other prayers, including the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary, are said too. Of particular interest are prayers said for the universal Church, the clergy and religious, the sick and the poor in society, etc. The prayers are intermingled with hymns usually composed by the members. They are rich in biblical and moral themes and accompanied with indigenous music. A typical opening hymn sung in the Igbo language runs thus:

Otito diri Nna na Nwa na Muọ Nsọ.
N'obodo Fatima, na 1917,
Ka Eze-Nwanyi nke Eligwe
Biakwutere ụmụaka atọ.

Aha ya bụ Lucy,
Aha ya bụ Francisco,
Aha ya bụ Jecinta, n'obodo Fatima.

Ọ si ha kpebe ekpere;
Ọ si ha mebe ọpipia;
Ọ si ha kpebe ekpere
Maka njọ nke ụwa.
Otito diri Jesu na ndụ ebebe, Amen.[69]

(Translation)

Glory to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
In the town of Fatima, in 1917,
The Queen of Heaven appeared to three children.

Her name was Lucy,
His name was Francis,
Her name was Jacinta.

She told them to pray;
She told them to do penance;
She told them to pray
For the sins of the world.
Glory be to Jesus now and for ever, Amen.

Many talented composers have composed songs which are now widely used during prayer sessions and other liturgical functions in the Catholic Church.

With time, the following activities have been added to the movement: (a) Parents' Day - a day set aside on which parents of children belonging to a centre are invited to join in special prayers and other activities by the centre. These include plays staged by the children and funfair. The parents in turn donate money to support the centre. They discuss special problems which beset the centre. Each centre usually has a patron chosen from the locality. He or she acts as father or mother of the centre. (b) A Congress: - This is usually held on the 13th day of each month. On this day all the Block Rosary Centres within a parish or zone gather in the parish church or any other suitable place for joint

prayers and other social activities. It is generally an occasion of great merriment, singing and rejoicing. It is also an occasion for a centre to display its latest stock of songs as well as members. Each centre announces its arrival with drumming and dancing. Three little children – a boy and two girls – aged between 7 and 10, lead the way, carrying a mounted picture of Our Lady of Fatima and two lighted candles, which are later placed on a table to serve as altar. The procession of members of a centre to a congress causes great excitement in the neighbourhood, as people, especially children, troop out to admire the dancing and singing group, making its way gaily to the meeting-place. The congress, therefore, is a powerful way of propagating the activities of a centre and recruiting new members. The 13th day of the month is chosen in commemoration of the apparitions of Mary, the mother of Jesus which took place on the 13th day of six consecutive months in 1917 in Fatima, Portugal.

An ordinary prayer session is interrupted with special religious and moral lessons given to the children by adult members. The willingness of children to listen and to learn is one of the blessings of the movement – one which endears it to parents and church leaders alike. Some people therefore see the Block Rosary Crusade as a good alternative to the use of the school as a means of evangelising children

and wonder why the Catholic Church should continue to press for the return of her schools.[70] Today, some Christian churches have followed the example of the Block Rosary Crusade and have established similar praying groups. The CMS in Onitsha now have an Anglican Praying Association (APA).

Chiefs, Cultural Revival and the Church

One significant aspect of the development of the church in recent times is that increased participation by organized lay men and women tends to render the role of "outside" agents less important. "Outside" agents here mean those agents which aid church growth but are not necessarily an integral part of the church. Among them are chiefs. Since the era of warrant chiefs, chieftancy in the former Eastern Nigeria has undergone many changes – each time having the power of chiefs reduced and giving them a different function in society.[71] In the period before Independence, politicians created a House of Chiefs and used chiefs to build local support for the political parties by manipulating their appointments and grading. After Independence, the chiefs' political weight diminished considerably. The Military Government in 1966 abolished the Ministry of Chiefs and Customary Courts earlier created by the politicians. It suspended the Customary Courts and the recognition of the chiefs associated with them and with the House of Chiefs.[72] At the end of the

civil war the Government revived the institution of chiefs. Various communities began to select chiefs who were presented to the government for recognition. A sign of the weakening of the power of chiefs and the supremacy of the community can be seen from the various town constitutions guiding the selection of chiefs. A case is that of Alor – a town in Idemili Division of Anambra State of Nigeria. Alor appointed and installed its first chief in 1972, following the making of a constitution by the people to govern their town. To qualify for the post of traditional head or Igwe of Alor an aspirant must be one

> whose father is/was an indigene of Alor by birth provided that he is not below the age of thirty-five; an Ozo titled man, married, never been convicted of murder or offence involving dishonesty by a court; a person of sound mind... literate – provided that illiteracy shall not be a bar if the interest of the community shall nevertheless be served.[73]

The constitution clearly asserts the supremacy of the community over the Igwe (chief) and that the stool is not hereditary. The Igwe is nothing more than a titular figure. The Constitution states that

> The Igwe shall be the ceremonial head in the community and shall be responsible for preservation of the community's cultural and traditional heritage. He shall represent the community on all ceremonial occasion... The Igwe shall not exercise any political

> powers provided that the Igwe-in-Council may effect amicable settlement of disputes amongst his subjects who freely submit to his jurisdiction.[74]

Many towns in Igboland today have constitutions similar to the one above. Neither the town which selects its chief (Igwe), nor the Government that accords him recognition, gives him meaningful political power. It is understandable from the above that the chief in recent times could himself alone no longer wield in the church the kind of power his predecessor wielded in the early colonial period. Not unaware of this some chiefs today still long to do so. They believe they can be of great use to the Church if given the opportunity and confidence. Chief Michael Ojiako — the successor of the great warrant chief, Ojiako Ezenne of Adazi[75] in old Awka Division of Onitsha Province had this to say about the Church today:

> The Fathers lack something in their behaviour. Any Reverend Father who comes to a town must try to know the chief of the town, and ally himself with him just like the Fathers in the early years of the church. Today they rather look for church (lay) leaders, such as the knights of Saint Mulumba, the church councillors, forgetting that not all those church leaders have influence in the community. Besides, there are some of them the community would not like to see. The community might believe those men are responsible for their setback — all this unknown, perhaps, to the Father.[76]

The above observation by Chief Michael Ojiako is true to some extent. Many priests and church leaders do not involve chiefs or traditional rulers in church administration any more. Where they do, it is not necessarily because of their office as chiefs but as believers. One area which however calls for closer relation and interaction between the churches and traditional rulers is the question of cultural revival. Since the civil war, and partly because of it, there has been a wave of revival of culture in many parts of Igboland. The genesis of this can be attributed to four main factors. First, the civil war sent many Igbo people living in other parts of Nigeria back to their homeland. These returnees realized more than ever before the dictum "No place like home". They embarked on rehabilitation of their war-battered homes. They began to reassess their values. They realized that what they could hold on to permanently was what their communities provided and not what they acquired while abroad - most of which was lost when they fled to their homes. Many, therefore, craved for a revival of some of their customs and tradition which had been neglected. The most popular is the Ozo title. Many towns petitioned church authorities to allow Christians to take such titles hitherto denied them because they were said to contain idolatrous practices. The Catholic Church was hard pressed more than ever to grant such demands as we shall

see later with reference to one particular local case. The following towns in Onitsha Archdiocese reached agreement with the Catholic Church in the matter of Ozo title on the given dates: Orsumoghu 1969; Ojoto-Uno 1969; Eziowelle 1969; Ubulu-Isiuzor 1970; Uga 1970; Abatete 1970.[77]

A second factor which helped to awaken interest in culture was the rise of many voluntary mutual-aid associations commonly called "social clubs".[78] The cardinal aims and objectives of these clubs include (a) the provision of social security to members; (b) stimulation and encouragement of community development projects; (c) provision of economic assistance to business-conscious members and (d) stimulation of cultural awareness. The last point is demonstrated by the complex initiation and funeral rites some of the clubs have evolved for themselves. Critics see them as an attempt to revive or recover Igbo cultural past. Members are made to love and appreciate the beauty of Igbo culture. In their formal functions many of them dress in traditional modes. They also take various traditional titles which portray their newly acquired wealth. A popular title is, for instance, Akajiaku, which literally means "the hand that controls wealth."

A third factor was the appointment of new chiefs for many communities. Because some of these chiefs had no traditional claim to their position — having

acquired chieftaincy because of their wealth and affluence in society – they try to give their new position some air of traditionality by reviving some old customs and traditions of their people, or, in some places, create entirely new festivals. A festival which is fast spreading to many communities is Ofala. Traditionally, Ofala was the official outing-ceremony performed by a king annually in societies who regarded their king as a quasi-divine person. Onitsha is one of such towns.[79] Today in many towns in Igbo heartland the newly appointed chiefs perform Ofala.

The fourth factor for the cultural revival was the celebration in Nigeria in 1977 of the Second Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture commonly referred to as "Festac 77". Festac 77 was meant, among other things,

(i) To ensure the revival, resurgence, propagation and promotion of Black and African Culture, and black cultural values and civilization;
(ii) To preserve Black and African culture in its highest and widest conception;
(iii) To bring to light the diverse contribution of Black and African people to the universal current of thought and the arts.[80]

Little wonder therefore that there was great cultural resurgence in many Igbo communities, especially from the mid-seventies, when many people had begun to

benefit from the country's rich oil wealth. As would be expected also, the Christian churches became alarmed at the way the cultural revival was going, and especially at some of the rites being revived. Church leaders questioned the cultural authenticity of some of the rites and practices. They condemned others as a reversion to paganism. It must be remembered that most of those who craved to revive Igbo culture are Christians. The churches' reaction is therefore understandable. To help check "excesses" church leaders issued occasional warnings to their members. One of them reads,

> I would like to mention the problem posed by those who use the umbrella of cultural adaptation to try to revive customs and traditions which cannot be reconciled with revealed truth. Some people have even had the boldness to say that spirit and ancestor worship, fortune-telling, charms and polygamy are our cultural heritage and should be maintained. The answer is that these practices contradict divine revelation. They have therefore to give way....[81]

Some lay writers, while admitting the possibility of going to excess in the matter of cultural revival, argue that much more has still to be done by the Igbo towards the revival of their culture. Thus Pita Ejiofor lamented,

> The Igbo man is not doing very much for the Igbo culture. Igbos are not getting the attention of writers

> commensurate with their position in Nigeria. Our politicians place culture at the very bottom of their priority list, the creation of a cultural division in Anambra State not-withstanding. The academic community scorns Igbo culture in action, if not in words... Partly as a result of these the Igbos are not enjoying the pride that is their due in Nigeria.[82]

Therefore, the revival of Igbo culture places the Igbo man in a dilemma. The Church in Igboland faces the same dilemma. To turn a deaf ear and blind eye to the people's craving for a cultural revival may spell doom for the Church as it could lead to a substantial loss of her members. A possible solution to this problem is to involve what was referred to above as "outside agents" of change in the Church. These include chiefs and social clubs.[83] Where the church works hand-in-hand with the local chief and his cabinet, the result has been very rewarding and profitable to all parties. This has been the case with many communities, especially with regard to the ozo title-taking and other traditional rites. Where this was not so, there has been considerable tension and conflict, since both parties generally pursue independent and sometimes parallel lines of action. A case in point is Onitsha town. Here, the initiative to check excesses in cultural revival was taken independently by both the Catholic Church and the Obi (chief) and his councillors (Ndichie). Attempts in

the past to reach an agreement between both parties through dialogue failed.[84]

At the end of the civil war, the question of Ozo title-taking by Christians was reopened by the Church. A committee was formed by the Church to review the matter.[85] It included some Christians who had earlier taken Ozo title in accordance with Onitsha custom and tradition but who were barred from full participation in the Church's worship because of the titles they had taken which the Church forbade Christians from taking because she considered them "pagan". The bone of contention was and remains the presence and use of the following symbols in the title-taking ceremony: Okpulukpu and Okwachi. The first is a rectangular wooden bowl with a cover of identical shape. It is both a symbolic representation of one's ancestors and a treasure box for the Ozo initiate. It is usually smeared all-over with the blood of animals slaughtered, as it were, in sacrifice, but in reality the blood smeared is a camouflage to scare away the un-initiated who might be tempted to tamper with the hidden treasure inside the bowl. The Okwachi is another rectangular wooden bowl without a cover. It contains four pieces of sticks representing the Chi or personal god (spirit) of the Ozo man. Both bowl and sticks are painted all-over with white native chalk (Nzu). Christians object to the use of Okpulukpu and Okwachi in the Ozo

initiation rite, and after. They also object to the rite of Ije-na-ani, whereby the initiate goes to the shrine of the earth-goddess to pay homage to the spot believed to be the original place where the ancestors of Onitsha people first settled. Many Onitsha titled men strongly defend the use of Okpulukpu and Okwachi as well as Ije-na-ani on grounds of Onitsha custom and tradition which they say is devoid of idolatry. Writing on this matter, Francis Nwokedi – an Onitsha Ozo man – said,

> Putting aside the occasional intolerance of Christian religion and sometimes the arrogance of its propagators, it should be obvious to any impartial observer that what applied to Christian symbols, such as relics and statues should also apply to the edealistic (sic) symbols such as Ikenga, Okpulukpu, Okwachi and Osisi and other things usually associated with Ozo title seen from the point of view of traditionalist... The Christians should not seek to destroy the custom and tradition of the people.[86]

The point made above by Nwokedi seems to be the stand of Onitsha Ozo titled men (Agbalanze) on the issue of modification of Ozo title in Onitsha. For them, there should be total acceptance of it as it is, not reform or modification. If any Christian wants to take the title, he can do so provided he is prepared to take it according to Onitsha custom and tradition.[87]

Whereas Onitsha indigenes and the Church could not reach agreement on the reform of Ozo title, Onitsha indigenes themselves recently undertook the

reform of some of their traditional rites without involving the Christian Churches, thereby creating possible areas of increased conflict and tension between the Church and the local community. In 1979, following complaints by certain people that some customary and traditional rites were being performed at very exorbitant prices and in a manner contrary to genuine Onitsha custom, the Obi and his Council (Ndichie)issued some guidelines aimed at regulating the performance of those rites.[88] The two principal areas covered are marriage and funeral. As stated in the guidelines, the objectives of the reforms are

> (a) to restate the basic marriage and funeral rites with Onitsha customs and tradition;
> (b) to eliminate those practices which are alien to Onitsha customs and tradition and
> (c) to reduce the unnecessary and often scandalous waste and the general exhibition of wealth and opulence which have of late characterized the performance of these traditional rites amongst the Onitsha people and which have tended to discourage the less privileged Onitsha man or woman from performing these essential rites.[89]

Though laudable in some of their clauses, especially those which cut down on the materials used in performing the rites, many of the regulations are not acceptable to the Christians because they tended to entrench or revive customs and traditions which offend Christian beliefs and practices. For instance,

Christians want to be left alone to perfom their marriages and funeral rites without being forced to follow the new regulations, however simplified and inexpensive they are. Thus, reacting to the regulations on funerals and marriages, the Rev. Monsignor G.A. Onuorah of St. Mary's Parish Onitsha said,

> What matters is not the simplification of the traditional rites but whether the thing which has been simplified has the Christian view in mind. No. It is a kind of simplification of the traditional, and perhaps, pagan way of burial ceremony and of marriage, as it were. The Christians are not considered as such...[90]

Christians, therefore, find it hard to follow the revised Onitsha regulations on funerals and marriages. Those who do so are usually denied Christian rites. Many Christians are therefore left in a dilemma since non-performance of the customary rites could deny one one's customary rights in one's family or in the town, whereas performance of them incurs one the wrath of the Church.

The solution of the Onitsha problem may not be in sight but the example of some Igbo communities where there is little or no conflict between the Church and the indigenous people over the reform or modification of indigenous customs could be a guide. That is moreso where the reforms affect the social rather than the religious aspects of the customs and traditions, and where Christian views are

respected and as far as possible incorporated. A case in point is Umuoji town — an Igbo community living about 18 kilometres east of Onitsha. Here the town's main cultural union — Umuoji Improvement Union (UIU), together with its traditional ruler, Igwe Akum M.A. Nweze and his Council drew up on 26 December 1985 rules regulating some customary rites in the town.[91] Among the major rites amended or modified are funeral ceremonies, land deals, marriages and traditional dances. The UIU gave the following four reasons for the changes:

(a) To confer uniformity in the daily lives of the community and the need to say "This is the Umuoji Culture" on given incidents and practices;
(b) To help the good people of the community to conserve their resources that are being drained away frivolously to the detriment of personal and communal developments;
(c) To check immorality that is rapidly being accepted as our daily way of life;
(d) To help our less-affluent brothers and sisters and young people fit into the society, conserve what they have, in order to better their lot.[92]

The new rules and regulations cut down drastically the number of persons who take part in many customary ceremonies; also reduced the value of gifts usually offered on such occasions. For instance, on the first day of negotiation of traditional marriage a suitor

can be accompanied to the house of his fiancée by not more than five other persons.[93] In the past the number could reach twenty or even more. Similarly, in funeral ceremonies the number and category of persons to do the confined mourning have been reduced. For instance, the married immediate relations of a deceased person — Umunne-Ozu — are obliged to remain in mourning confinement for only eight days instead of twelve or more, as in the past.

Where a breach of the law is more likely to occur and a display of wealth is judged to be part of the motive for the breach, the UIU imposes very grave sanctions. For instance, a son-in-law can present only a ram or a she-goat and not a cow, as in the past, while paying the customary condolence visit on the occasion of the death of his father-in-law. A breach of this law carries a penalty of ₦1,000 (one thousand naira).[94]

To help enforce the new rules and regulations the UIU created a policing agency called Umuoji Civil Defence Sub-Committee. Its work is to report cases of infringement of the rules to both the Igwe-in-Council (that is the chief and his council) and the UIU for appropriate fines. The rules and regulations became effective on 1st April 1986. Time will tell their efficacy.

It was perhaps possible to enact such rules and regulations because of the following reasons: Umuoji

has a large Christian population, made up of mainly Catholics and Anglicans. The traditional ruler, Igwe M.A. Nweze, is a Christian. He very much supported the reforms of what he called "obnoxious and expensive" traditional customs.[95] Relation between the Catholics and the Anglicans of the town is cordial and peaceful. Again, many Christians belong to the traditional Ozo titled class, following agreements reached between the Christian Churches and the Ozo titled men which led to the modification of the Ozo titles, thus making many Christians able to take the titles.[96] The sheer cost and wastage which some of the customary rites entailed made them no longer within the reach of most people especially at a time the country was undergoing severe economic strains.[97] It must be noted that besides the Christian Churches' direct involvement in the negotiations connected with the reform of Ozo titles, the modification of Umuoji customs and traditions was not the work of the Christian Churches but of the town's cultural union — UIU, the majority of which are however Christians. This shows that in the area of cultural adaptation Christian Churches could best act effectively not directly but indirectly — through their Christian members of cultural and town unions. Direct action by the churches may be inhibited where religious rivalry exists among the Christian Churches, or where the number of Christians with traditional titles is

very small. Again, Onitsha is an example of the latter. Here the number of practising Christians with traditional titles is small. As was seen above, reform of the customs was undertaken without reference to the Christian Churches, and therefore no agreement could be reached between the Christian Churches and the Onitsha community. The above study nevertheless reveals that in the matter of cultural adaptation chiefs still retain considerable power and influence which the Churches could use to their advantage.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

By the middle of this century the Catholic Church, which was relatively a latecomer in Southeastern Nigeria,[1] had in numerical terms virtually excelled all other Christian Churches there in the scramble for the soul of the African. She had by far the greatest number of primary schools and, consequently, pupils.[2] Indeed, of the estimated 3.9 million Christians in Eastern Nigeria in 1953,[3] the Catholic population was "just over 2 million," inclusive of Western Cameroons.[4] Despite her numerical strength, the Catholic Church was for a long time a sleeping giant when compared with the other Churches, especially the CMS, in the matter of sharing and wielding power in the political and social chessboard of the region. Indeed, the situation was so glaring that in the early fifties Catholics were openly ridiculed by their opponents, especially the CMS. They were called Akwukwo ukpaka ejighi eke ngwugwu - an Igbo expression which literally means "the leaves of the oil-bean tree (Pentaclethra macrophylla) which serve no useful purpose as wrapping paper."[5] What first awoke the sleeping giant was a rather local event which assumed wider importance. This was a caluminous report in a local newspaper in Onitsha about an Irish Reverend missionary who was alleged to have tried to embezzle £75,000 belonging to the local church where he worked. He was said to be carrying the money with him on his way home

on leave before he was intercepted. Catholic laity's reaction to this report significantly gave rise to a movement - the Awka District Catholic Union - which had far-reaching effects in arousing Catholics to fighting for their rights and defending their church. Similar militant Catholic lay movements arose elsewhere in Eastern Nigeria. An example was the Eastern Nigeria Catholic Council (ENCC), which was more widespread and more powerful. Catholics subsequently became a force to reckon with in the former Eastern Region of Nigeria. Catholic numerical strength gave the Catholic Church a considerable advantage over her Protestant counterparts, especially at the grassroots level.

The study of the role of Catholic women in church growth reveals, on the one hand, the extent to which non-formal education (as against school education) could be effectively used for building up strong Christian families. In this regard, individuals - usually wives of teachers and catechists - who themselves were not literate, played a great part in training fellow women and young girls newly converted and about to marry in the church, or to regularize their marriages according to church norms. They trained them in Christian doctrine, mothercraft and basic home economics. Madam Veronica Okaih of Adazi was a shining example of a countless number of such devoted Catholic women who worked tirelessly along-side their teacher or catechist-husbands in many mission outposts and centres in the

early years of the church here and before the spread of schools. Catholic women also displayed another remarkable aspect of Catholic lay initiatives. They did so through their highly structured formations, their militancy, endurance and tenacity of purpose in fighting for the Catholic Church. The structure of their organisation into stations, wards, parishes, and zones became a model for other Catholic lay organisations. Without them the battle for freedom of the Catholic Church to own and manage her schools along-side state schools could hardly have been won in the late fifties and early sixties. The fact that most of the women leaders, at least in the beginning, were not very literate, yet highly effective, makes one look for the cause of their dynamism and success elsewhere other than in school education, which has often been over-emphasized as a means of evangelisation here. This dynamism clearly lay in their deep commitment to their faith and church,[6] in addition to other factors.

Whereas the school was undoubtedly a major means used by the Catholic Church and other Christian churches to spread their religion, teachers, who were at the helm of affairs in the schools, did not seem to have received adequate reward, at least in material terms, commensurate with their often dedicated service to the churches. This partly explains why in general they strongly supported the change from mission management of schools to state management. They became, in time, both individually and through their union - the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) - the greatest opposition

to the return of schools by the government to the missions.

The take-over of mission schools also brought other significant changes which are often overlooked. It brought almost to an end the old-time practice whereby a mission school teacher was usually also made the local catechist. For the latter service, that is, mission catechist, he was of course not paid. This was supposedly the price he paid for being employed as a mission school teacher! The separation of both functions came mainly from the 1970s, largely as a result of government take-over of mission schools and, as it were, "liberated" the teachers! For the Church this led to a greater recognition of the place of catechists in their own right as full-time mission-workers. Furthermore, it led to an improvement of their conditions of service and status.

The radical changes which took place in the Church from the 1970s did not leave any major group untouched. One such important body which was strongly affected was the old church committee which was a unique creation of the African Church. The creation of parish councils (and station councils) to replace the old church committees greatly curbed the over-zealousness and autocractic tendencies which members of the old church committee usually displayed in the past, and which often led them into conflict with dissidents within the church and non-adherents. The new church councils, which are usually headed by priests and which chose members democratically, have more

grassroots support. The question of whether they have achieved more for the Church cannot be fully answered now since they are still new.

Chiefs, as was seen in the above study, played an inevitable role in helping the church to establish in different communities. The power and influence they wielded in the church was usually commensurate with their political power and, consequently, the decline of the latter led to the decline of the former. This notwithstanding, it has been shown that in the area of adaptation of the church to the local culture and tradition, chiefs are still a force to reckon with. The great interest Igbo people have shown towards the revival of their culture since the 1970s is one of the major problems confronting the Church which is very much now in the hands of the indigenous clergy. The solution of the problem calls for continued partnership between the Church and chiefs or traditional rulers. This kind of partnership or relationship is undoubtedly new and delicate, and must be handled with great care.

The above study has shown therefore that the contribution of the laity to the growth of the Christian Churches, especially the Catholic Church, is greater and more complex than has hitherto been realized or conceded by scholars. The future role of the laity will continue to be very important, if not crucial to the survival of Christianity in the former Onitsha Province which is generally regarded as the heart of Christianity in Nigeria during what has been called the new era of evangelisation.[7]

NOTES TO THE CHAPTERS

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

1. See E. Ayandele, The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria (London: Longman, 1966).
2. Ibid., Preface, xvii,
3. F. K. Ekechi, Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland 1857-1914 (London: Frank Cass, 1971).
4. S. Graham, Government and Mission Education in Northern Nigeria 1900-1919 (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1966).
5. J. P. Jordan, Bishop Shanahan of Southern Nigeria (Dublin: Elo Press, 1971 ed,).
6. Ibid., Preface to 1971 edition, p. ix.
7. For more works on Catholic missionary enterprise in Southern Nigeria see C. M. Cooke, "The Roman Catholic Mission in Calabar 1903-1960" (London University Ph.D thesis, 1977); I. R. A. Ozigboh, "A study of the Catholic Missionary Enterprise in Southern Nigeria 1885-1939" (Ph.D thesis, Birmingham, 1980).
8. J. B. Webster, The African Churches Among the Yoruba (Oxford, 1964).
9. J.D.Y. Peel, Aladura: A Religious Movement Among the Yoruba (London, 1968).
10. H. W. Turner, African Independent Church : Vol. 1. The Church of the Lord, Aladura; Vol. 11: The Life and Faith of the Church (Oxford, 1967).
11. The urge to study more deeply and widely this aspect of African church history formed the theme of a recent seminar on the history of Christianity in Africa jointly sponsored by the Conference of Theological Institutions and Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians held in Nairobi, Kenya.

See report by Rev. F.M. Lukanima in AMECEA Documentation Service (Nairobi, Kenya) ADS 341, 8 December 1986.

12. See Ekechi's reference to Ephraim Agha (p.78) and Chief Idigo (p.90), both of whom were powerful in spreading the Christian faith. See also his reference to the role of catechists (p.78).

13. Cooke, op. cit., p. 159.

14. O. U. Kalu, "General Introduction", in The History of Christianity in West Africa, Longman, p.6.

15. Ibid., p.6.

16. A full study of the Block Rosary Crusade is made in chapter 6.

17. An example is Awka District Catholic Union (ADCU). See chapter 3.

18. A Hastings, A History of African Christianity (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 50-51.

19. Ibid, p. 114.

20. E. Isichei, (ed), Varieties of Christian Experience in Nigeria, Macmillan, 1982

21. Ibid., p.7

22. S.U. Erivwo, "Christianity in Urhoboland 1901-1961" (Ph.D. thesis, Ibadan University, 1972); for East Africa see A. J. Temu, British Protestant Mission (London: 1973); T. Tuma, Building a Ugandan Church - African Participation in Church Growth and Expansion in Busoga, 1891-1914 (Nairobi: Kenya Lit. Bureau, 1980).

23. S.C. Chuta, "Africans in the Christianization of Southern Igboland 1875-1952" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Nigeria Nsukka, 1986).

24. G.O.M. Tasie, The Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta 1864-1918 (Leiden: 1978).

25. Chuta, op. cit., p. 32

26. Ibid., p. 33.

27. See C.A. Obi, (ed), A Hundred Years of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria 1885-1985 (Onitsha: Africana-Fep, 1985); H.A. Adigwe, "The beginnings of the Catholic Church Among the Igbos of South-Eastern Nigeria, 1885-1930" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Vienna, 1966).

28. For instance, Onitsha Archdiocese had only one white priest in 1980 and 75 indigenous priests, whereas in 1965 it had 57 white priests and 9 indigenous ones. See A.O. Makozi and G. J. Ojo (eds), The History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria, (Macmillan, 1982), p. 45

29. See Chapter 6.

30. Obi, op. cit., Chapter 1

31. The associations and movements will be studied in the chapters of the thesis, They include the ADCU, Eastern Nigeria Catholic Council (ENCC) and the Catholic Women's Organisation (CWO).

32. E. Isichei, A History of the Igbo People (Macmillan, 1976); A. Afigbo, Ropes of Sand (Oxford University Press, Ibadan, 1981).

33. Afigbo, Ropes of Sand, p. 50.

34. T. Shaw, Igbo-Ukwu: An Account of Archaeological Discoveries in Eastern Nigeria - 2 Vols (London, 1970).

35. G.I. Jones, The Trading States of Oil Rivers, reprint (London, 1964), p. 30. Jones based his conclusion on cultural and linguistic analysis of Igboland.

36. Isichei, A History of the Igbo People, p. 5

37. V.C. Uchendu, The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, London, 1965), ch. 4.

38. National Archives Enugu (NAE): OP. 1865-ONDIST. 12/1/1260 - Chief Secretary, Eastern Nigeria to

Lawton, Resident, Onitsha Province, 1923. Quoted in Annual Report, Onitsha Province, 1939.

39. J.P. Jordan "Onitsha-Owerri: Une Grande épopee spirituelle," Bulletin de la Congrégation (Paris), 43, 650 (July-August, 1953).

40. NAE: OP. 1865-ONDIST. 12/1/1260: Annual Report, 1939.

41. Ibid.

CHAPTER ONE

1. The terminology 'chief' is used here and throughout the chapter to refer to anyone who exercised considerable political authority over a group, whether the authority was based on tradition (as in natural rulers), or given by an external body, such as in the Warrant chiefs. For more on the problem of defining chiefs in Eastern Nigeria see G.I. Jones, "Chieftaincy in the former Eastern Region of Nigeria," in M. Crowder and O. Ikime (eds), West African Chiefs, Longman, 1979 ed., pp. 15-36.

2. Holy Ghost Fathers' Journal, Onitsha, December 29, 1885 to January 10, 1886. Quoted in C.A. Obi (ed.), A Hundred Years of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria 1885-1985 (Africana-Fep, Nigeria, 1985), p. 45

3. Ibid., p.45

4. The CMS missionaries, led by the Rev. S. Crowther, arrived at Onitsha on 26 July, 1857 to establish a mission. See F.K. Ekechi, Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland 1857-1914. Ch. 1.

5. Ibid., p. 37. This was in the period shortly before the Catholic missionaries arrived.

6. Ibid., p. 75.

7. Warrant chiefs and native courts became an important means of British administration of Igboland mainly after 1900. See A. E. Afigbo, The Warrant Chiefs, Longman, 1972, Ch. 2.

8. An account of the conversion of Chief Joseph Onyekomeli Idigo of Aguleri has been given in detail in H.A. Adigwe, "The beginnings of the Catholic Church among the Ibos of South-eastern Nigeria 1885-1930", (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Vienna ~~Wien~~ University, 1966); see also Ekechi, op. cit., Ch. V, where Idigo was erroneously called Samuel instead of Joseph.

9. Information from Igwe (chief) Alphonsus Ezeudu Idigo, great grandson of Joseph Idigo, at present the chief of Aguleri. (Interviewed at Aguleri, 10 November 1983). Many writers erroneously describe Joseph Idigo as 'king'.

10. See M.C.M. Idigo, The History of Aguleri, Yaba, Nicholas Publ. Company, 1955, pp. 21-30.

11. Ibid. Chief Idigo, together with eleven others, signed on behalf of Aguleri, whilst C.S.P Hankin signed on behalf of the Company.

12. Ekechi, op. cit., p. 91.

13. For a comprehensive account of the warrant chiefs in Southeastern Nigeria see Afigbo, The Warrant Chiefs.

14. Annual Colonial Report (1904), pp. 33-34.

15. National Archives Enugu (NAE): OP, 1865-ONDIST, 12/1/1260. Extracts from Annual Report, Onitsha Province, 1939.

16. The appointment of warrant chiefs came after the Proclamation No. 25 in 1901. See S.N. Nwabara, Iboland, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1977.

17. Afigbo, op. cit., p.84

18. Ibid., p. 89

19. Ekechi, op. cit., p. 15

20. Bishop Crowther was said to have helped him materially, believing that his disaffection with the CMS Church was due to economic hardship. See Ekechi, op. cit., p. 21

21. The exact date of his conversion was not stated in Mission records.

22. Adigwe, op. cit., pp. 101-102.

23. M. C. Osu, "The dispute over the Obiship of Onitsha, 1899-1901" (unpublished B.A. dissertation, University of Nigeria Nsukka, 1974) p.36

24. Holy Ghost Fathers' Journal, Onitsha, 1885-1912: Entry on November 8, 1900. (Translation of the original diary by Father Treich, Port Harcourt, 1947-1950).

25. Obi, op. cit., p. 75.

26. Father Lejeune to his Superiors, Paris, 13 May 1902. Quoted in Adigwe, op. cit., p. 165.

27. He was thus acclaimed during his annual Ofala celebration at Onitsha. See S. I. Bosah, Groundwork of the History and Culture of Onitsha (Onitsha, n.d.), pp. 33-37.

28. Translation of the original letter which was published in French in the Annales Apostoliques, 6 (1902), pp. 139-140. See Adigwe, op. cit., pp. 336-337.

29. Ekechi, op. cit., p. 184. The High School taught subjects like elementary algebra, geometry, book- and foreign languages, in addition to industrial subjects.

30. Studies of some of these warrant chiefs have recently been made. See, for instance, D. Onyeama, Chief Onyeama, Delta Press, Enugu, 1982.

31. National Archives Enugu (NAE): J. Ross, "Intelligence Report on Native Administration, Awka Division, 1930." (OP. 243/1929 ON. PROF. 7/16/151).

32. NAE: AW 499-AWDIST. 2/1/328: Senior Resident F. Myrne to District Officer, Awka, 22 January 1932.

33. There were several references to the case. See NAE: AW 478-AWDIST. 2/1/320 - Chief Ojiako of Adazi-Nuku (sic) vs Mbamali; AW. 9/1931/95 - J. Ross (D.O., Awka) to F. H. Ingles (Resident, Onitsha) 26 June 1931; OP.136/1931/18 - Ingles to Ross, 11 August 1931.

34. NAE: OP. 152/1931/36 - Ingles to Ross, 21 September 1931.

35. The son of Chief Ojiako, Michael, contended that his father did not keep Mgbocha as a pawn but actually paid dowry to Mbamali, her father, with a view to marrying her later. (Interviewed at Adazi, 19 December 1985).

36. Ibid. (Interview with Michael Ojiako, Adazi, 19 December, 1985).

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Information on Nimo, especially the career of Chief Michael Onyiuke II, came mainly from oral interviews with those acquainted with him. They include Mr Albert Onyiuke (his oldest surviving son), Mr Vincent Igboka (aged about 80 and a veteran catechist and school teacher in Nimo), Mr Eugene Ikewelugo (aged over 85) and Emmanuel Akukalia (aged about 90). All, except Akukalia, are from Nimo. Akukalia is form Ukpo, a nearby town.

41. Due to the revival of the office of traditional rulers by recent governments in Nigeria, there has been claims by rival families in many Igbo communities as to who should present candidates to the government for recognition as chief.

For instance, in Achina, the present writer's town, there has been since 1959 a protracted dispute over the legitimate traditional ruler of the town.

42. Information from Albert Onyiuke, interviewed on 4 May 1986.

43. Bishop Joseph Shanahan probably visited Nimo during his long tour of the Igbo hinterland in 1908. See J.P. Jordan, Bishop Shanahan of Southern Nigeria, p.104

44. They include V. Igboka and Eugene Ikewelugo. Mr Igboka has been catechist in Nimo since the last 46 years. Mr Ikewelugo was a pupil at the first primary school built by the Catholic Church in Nimo. He also attended Nimo Industrial Training School.

45. F.C. Agubata, "Chieftaincy in Nimo", (unpublished N.C.E. History project paper, Awka College of Education, 1982), pp.7-8.

46. NAE: OP.731-ONDIST 12/1/504 - Schedule I : Application for lease of land for Missionary Sisters' Residence.

47. Ibid., Letter of D.O., Onitsha Division to Resident, Onitsha Province, 18 August 1933.

48. Ibid., Letter of A.D.O., Nnewi to Resident, Onitsha, 12 December 1944.

49. Jordan, op. cit., pp. 104-106

50. For a detailed account of the Catholic Church in Nteje see A.M.A. Mkpuefune, The Making of Modern Nteje 1891-1980, (Ehindero Press, Jos, 1980)

51. The story of Ofia Ogene is confirmed by some eye-witnesses, for example, Mr Richard Isidienu (aged over 80) - a pupil at the time of the incident. (Interviewed on 13 April 1983 at Nteje).

52. Michael was baptized when he was a pupil in Holy Trinity School, Onitsha.

53. See Chapter 3 - Old Adazi Mission and the Awka District Catholic Union.

54. Interview with Eugene Ikewelugo, 2 August 1986. Other pioneer carpenters trained at the workshop include Daniel Obiweluzo, John Okonkwo and Philip Okonkwo.

55. The first house was built in 1923. It was opened and blessed by Bishop Shanahan. A new palace replaced it in 1933. Both houses stand to this day.

56. Information from Emmanuel Akukalia, interviewed at Ukpo on 29 June 1986. This was affirmed by Rev. Monsignor J. Nwibegbunam - also a native of Ukpo. Ukpo town has been a strong CMS centre.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

59. Akukalia said that on many occasions Chief Michael Eze arraigned him before the Abagana Native Court on trumpet-up charges but he was set free on the intervention of Chief Michael Onyiuke of Nimo. For Intelligence Report on Chief Michael Onyiuke see NAE: OP 243/1929 - 7/16/151.

60. Also condemned were traditional marriages and the Mmanwu (Masquerade) cult. See Adigwe, op. cit., pp. 203-204.

61. E.A. Ayandele, The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914, Longman, 1971 ed., p. 275; The Church and Native Customs, CMS Press, Lagos, 1914.

62. E.C.O. Ilogu, Christian Ethics in an African Background, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), p. 32.

63. For a detailed account of structural differentiation in Onitsha see R.N. Henderson, The King in

Everyman, London, Yale University Press, 1972, Pt. III; also Bosah, op. cit., Ch. XI.

64. See Nwabara, Igboland, for a good chronological account of the changes in local government administration in Igboland.

65. Archdiocesan Secretariat Onitsha (ASON) records: letter of Obi Okosi II to Bishop Heerey, 22 January, 1942. (Cf. 'Onitsha File').

66. ASON: Letter of Bishop Heerey to Obi Okosi II, 25 March 1942.

67. ASON: Letter of Bishop Heerey to Onitsha Catholics, 29 October, 1944.

68. ASON: F/118 - Resident, Onitsha Province to the Manager, Roman Catholic Mission, Onitsha, 13 November, 1944.

69. NAE: ONPROF. 342/108 - Resident, Onitsha Province to the Secretary, Eastern Provinces, Enugu, 15 February 1945.

70. Information from E. Akukalia, 29 June 1986.

71. See Chapter 6.

72. Information on Chief Solomon Ezeokoli came mainly from interviews with the following: Chief Edmund Ezeokoli II (son of Solomon Ezeokoli), Rev. Monsignor A. Anyichie of Nnobi, and Jerome Udo (Aged about 80 years and a steward to Rev. Father Groetz in Nnobi).

73. C. E. Chukwunyere, "History of Chieftaincy in Nnobi", (unpublished B.A. History dissertation, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1975).

74. Some informants say Ezeokoli outwitted other chiefs; others say he was the most learned - having learnt some English language because of his association with the CMS. It is not unlikely the CMS Church influenced his choice,

75. E. Ikenga-Metuh and C. Ejizu, Hundred Years of Catholicism in Eastern Nigeria 1885-1985 - The Nnewi Story, Nimo, Asele Institute, 1985, p. 53.

76. For different traditions of origin of the Catholic Church in Nnobi see P. I. Ufudo, "The impact of Christian Missions on Nnobi 1908-1960," (unpublished B.A. dissertation, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1976).

77. The CMS Church considered Uli and Ufie as elements of traditional religion.

78. Information from Monsignor Alfred Anyichie. It was confirmed by Jerome, 19 March, 1986.

79. Like other warrant chiefs, Ezeokoli was responsible for providing labour for the construction of the Nnewi-Nnobi Road.

80. It was said that on getting gratification from a town, he would send it a teacher.

81. See Chukwunyere, op. cit., p. 84. Also interview with Chief Edmund Ezeokoli, 22 February 1986. Today, Edmund, his son, is the traditional ruler of Nnobi. He succeeded his father in 1957, two years after his death.

82. CSE: "Conférence sur les écoles dans la Nigeria," (n.d.) - Report based on Anua Region of Eastern Nigeria.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid.

CHAPTER TWO

1. See J. Derrick, "The 'Native Clerk' in Colonial West Africa". African Affairs, 82, 326 (January 1983), pp. 61-74.

2. For instance, see J.P. Jordan, Bishop Shanahan of Southern Nigeria, passim; J. Shanahan, "How the Native Catechist helps," Holy Ghost Fathers' Missionary Annals, June 1921.

3. There have been considerable studies on the work of catechists in East and Central Africa. See, for instance, A. Shorter and E. Kataza (eds), Missionaries to Yourselves, (London: Chapman, 1972). This book contains an interesting bibliography on research studies about catechists in Western Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Malawi.

4. Mission control of schools virtually ceased in many parts of the former Eastern Nigeria from 1970, following government take over of schools. The change weakened the use of schools as a means of evangelisation. The effects of this on teachers will be examined in Chapter Six.

5. Emmanuel Akaenyi, teacher-catechist; aged 71; personal communication, Abagana, 1 January 1983.

6. The Vernacular Teacher, designated as 'C.V.,' was one whose qualification was below the primary school Standard Six pass. On passing Standard Six, he became a 'C.D.' teacher. See J.P.A. Obidiwe, Our Systems of Education - Past and Present, (Onitsha: Etukokwu Press, 1984), pp.8-9.

7. 'Assisted' schools were schools which had reached the standard demanded by the government Education Authorities for the approval of primary schools. Teachers in such schools were generally better educated than those in unassisted schools. For more on assisted mission schools see A.B. Fafunwa, History of Education in Nigeria, (London: George

Allen and Unwin, 1974) pp. 97-98.

8. Information on the three categories of teacher-catechists comes from interviews with several former teachers, e.g. A.U. Unigwe (Eziora, Ozubulu, 22 August 1983) and C.N. Ndubisi (Ozubulu, 22 August 1983).

9. For the programme of the Christian missions to train African agents in Nigeria see J.F.A. Ajayi, Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841-1891, Longmans, 1969 pp. 147-151

10. Ajayi, op. cit., p. 147

11. A.E. Afigbo, "Background to the Education Code, 1903", Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, 4, 2 (1968), p. 201.

12. For more on life in the Christian Village see Ajayi, op. cit., pp. 114-116; also C.A. Obi, "The Christian Village as an early Missionary Strategy for Evangelisation at Onitsha - Lower Niger Mission," in V.A. Nwosu (ed), The Catholic Church in Onitsha - People, Places and Events, 1885-1985, (Onitsha: Etukokwu Press, 1985), pp. 18-41.

13. Obi, op. cit., p. 36.

14. Jordan, op. cit., p. 101; Adigwe, op. cit., pp.190-192.

15. Afigbo, op. cit.

16. Fafunwa, op., p. 111.

17. Adigwe, op. cit., p. 191.

18. In Shanahan's Report to the Mother House in France on September 21, 1918 he remarked, "As for Christianity the results are poor and the future seems hardly encouraging." Quoted in Adigwe, op. cit., p. 193.

19. See C. A. Obi, "Eminent Missionaries," in The Catholic Church in Onitsha, pp. 158-172. Also

J. N. Edemanya, retired school-headmaster, aged 80; personal communication, Onitsha, 12 May 1985.

20. The Catholic Church in Onitsha, p. 169.

21. W. J. Okonkwo, "Address at Golden Jubilee Wedding Anniversary, Ozubulu, 9 April 1983."

22. See Chapter Three for more on Adazi Mission and school.

23. Sylvester Edochie of Nteje, aged 76; personal communication, 9 March 1986.

24. Anua Mission was the first main Catholic centre after Calabar in what today is Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. The Mission had a resident priest by 1914, though founded in 1909.

25. P. Biechy, "Missionorganisation,"(C.S.E. B/553/08), n.d. Translated from the original German by Dr. Maria O. Nwosu, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Father Biechy became the parish priest of Anua after Father Kraft in December 1929. See Hugh McGrath, "Anua Mission," St Patrick's Missionary Bulletin, 1, 1 (June 1934).

26. St. Paul's Mission Eke is one of the oldest Catholic Missions in what today is Enugu Diocese in Anambra State of Nigeria. It was opened in 1917 by Father J. Correia, and spread far and wide, owing partly to the support of a paramount ruler, Chief Onyeama of Eke.

27. C.S.E.: "Notes on Eke Mission," (B.554/05). The notes were probably written by Father P. Whitney between 1929 and 1930. Eke Mission became a residential mission in 1922. It stretched up north for about 130 miles and down south for about 50 miles.

28. See "Circular Letter No. 10: Promulgation of Directions relative to the administration of the Sacraments in the Vicariate of S. Nigeria and of some other matters of general importance." (C.S.E.: B/554/05).

29. Ibid.

30. The British colonial government policy on education was sequel to the Phelps-Stokes Report on Education in Africa in 1922. See Phelps-Stokes Report on Education in Africa, Oxford University Press, 1962.

31. See "Memorandum on Education Policy in British Tropical Africa," Cmd. 2374 (H.M.S.O., 1925),p.6.

32. The three R.C.M. training colleges were St. Thomas College Ibuzo, St. Gregory's College Lagos and Mount Carmel Ebute-Metta. See Nigeria: Annual Report on the Education, Southern Provinces, 1928, Lagos: Government Printer, p.27

33. C.S.E.: B/553/7 - Fr. Jordan to School Managers, Supervisors and Principals, 15 July, 1948.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. P. N. Okeke, headmaster of St. Anthony's school, Umudioka from 1942 to 1947. He was trained in St. Charles College from 1937 to 1941. (Interviewed, 15 December 1983). Many informants confirmed this attitude of school managers discouraging ambitious students from pursuing higher education or (as teachers) leaving mission service.

37. A.U. Unigwe, a veteran teacher. (Interviewed at Eziora-Ozubulu, 22 August 1983).

38. Cyril G. Nwabugwu, retired school teacher and headmaster, aged about 69; personal communication at Ihiala, 13 April 1986.

39. It was dropped shortly after 1960, following stiff opposition to it by the Nigerian Union of Teachers. Instead the government passed a law empowering a worker to terminate his appointment with an employer after a month's notice or forfeit a month's salary. (Information from J.N. Edemanya - a retired veteran teacher and headmaster, aged about 75 years).

40. Following pressure from the Nigerian Union of Teachers, the government set up various commissions to review the conditions of service for teachers in both the public and private sectors. These included the Gorsuch and Harragin Commissions in the 1940s, the Morgan Commission in the 1950s, the Adefarasin and Asabia Commissions in the 1960s. See Fafunwa, op. cit., pp. 161, 229.

41. See Diocese of Owerri, 1950-1951, "Prospectus Status Missionis", Bishop Whelan to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of Faith, August 1951.

42. Like Anua and Eke (see Notes 24 and 26 above), Adazi was one of the earliest missions from where the Church spread to other places. It is situated almost at the centre of the old Awka District in the old Onitsha Province. The Fathers settled at Adazi permanently in 1924.

43. Information on Solomon Okaih came mainly from interview with people who knew him or lived with him. See also B.O. Ebunilo, A Short Life History of the Late Mr Solomon Okaih, 1903-1949 (Enugu: Skylark Press, n.d.)

44. Adazi Parish stretched as far as Uturu-Okigwe - a town about 70 miles north-east of Adazi. See map on p. 128.

45. Emmanuel Akukalia, personal communication, Ukpo, 29 June 1986.

46. Ebunilo, op. cit., p. 6.

47. Ibid.

48. Mr Joseph Nnebe, a pupil in Adazi in the thirties, and now a retired teacher. He is aged about 73 years. (Interviewed at Nibo, 21 March 1983).

49. Sylvester Edochie, personal communication, 9 March 1986.

50. Wouters and Laugel Manual for Catechist and

Teachers, Catholic Mission, Lagos, n.d., p. 6. A copy of this manual was found in the possesion of Mr Solomon Okaih.

51. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Nigeria: Conditions of Service for Lutheran Teachers in Nigeria, 1953. (The Lutheran Press, Obot Idim, Uyo).

52. Missionary Annals (September 1949).

53. Sylvester O. Izualor of Igbariam; retired teacher-catechist, aged about 72; personal communication, 28 March 1986.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. The teachers were Stephen Uzor, Philip Obiano and John Nwosu.

57. Sylvester Izualor, personal communication, 28 March 1986.

58. Ndi-ugbo-butelu is a derogatory Igbo expression for describing people who leave their home in search for ~~of~~ jobs elsewhere.

59. Sylvester Izualor, personal communication, 28 March 1986.

60. Sylvester Edochie, a teacher under Father Liddane in Adazi; personal communication, 9 March 1986. For more on Father Liddane see Chapter Three.

61. Sylvester Izualor - a friend of Dominic Ezeibe; personal communication, 28 March 1986.

62. See C.M. Cooke, "The Roman Catholic Mission in Calabar," (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1977), p. 157; Jordan, op. cit., p. 200; G. C. Ikeobi, "Towards the Christian purification of the Ozo Title Society in Onitsha Archdiocese as a prelude to its Christian integration" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Urban University, Rome, 1970). pp. 109-110.

63. This issue is treated in detail in Chapter Five.

64. NAE: OP 2248-ON DIST. 12/1/1448: Obunagu Villagers to Resident, Onitsha Province, 22 December 1941.

65. Ibid., District Officer, Awgu to Resident, Onitsha Province, 7 February 1942.

66. Ibid., Obunagu Villagers to Resident, Onitsha Province 10 March 1942.

67. NAE: NK 638-UDDIV 6/1/20.

68. Ibid., Letter of St Luke's Ogwui Church to District Officer, Nkanu, 28 June 1943.

69. NAE: NK 638-UDDIV 6/1/20: Letter of Sons of the Soil to District Officer, Agbani, 28 June 1943.

70. NAE: NK 638-UDDIV 6/1/20: Minutes by the District Officer Agbani, 24 July 1943 on the Petition of St Luke's Anglican Church Ogwui.

71. Madam Florence Onyeka - sister of Daniel Ofor; also Reuben Onyeka (her husband). Reuben was a member of Inyi Local Church Committee since 1939. Both were interviewed at Umuoma-Inyi, 4 January 1987.

72. NAE: OP 1301-ONDIST., 12/1/844: "Conflict between Christian rights and pagan customs."

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid.

75. NAE: OP 1301-ONDIST. 12/1/854: District Officer, Awgu to Resident, Onitsha Province, 2 April 1940.

76. NAE: OP 1301-ONDIST., 12/1/854: Obi Okosi II to District Officer, Onitsha, 5 June 1940.

77. NAE: OP 1301-ONDIST., 12/1/854: Resident, Onitsha Province to District Officers in Onitsha Province, 29 October 1940.

78. Jordan, op. cit., p. 200

79. ASON: Nnewi Parish Council Members to Bishop Heerey, 24 April 1945. See 'Nnewi File'.

80. ASON: Fr. Kettels to Nnewi Parish Councillors, 20 May 1945. See 'Nnewi File'.

81. ASON: 'Nnewi File': Father F. C. Kettels to Bishop Heerey, 25 May 1945.

82. ASON: 'Nnewi File': Letter of Selected Committee, Nnewi Parish to Bishop Heerey, 4 February 1948.

83. Ibid.

84. ASON: 'Nnewi File'; Letter of Nnobi Catholic Community to Bishop Heerey, 19 June 1947.

85. Jerome Udo, aged 78; one-time house-boy of Father Groetz in Nnobi; personal communication, 3 May 1986.

86. Rev. Monsignor Alfred Anyichie of Nnobi, personal communication, 29 March 1986.

87. A. C. Dike, retired teacher and headmaster; personal communication, 7 March 1987.

88. Information from M.I. Eke at Ozubulu. Interviewed on 25 August, 1983. Mr Eke was a teacher-catechist for 49 years and worked in many parts of old Onitsha Division, especially Dunukofia Parish.

89. G. Anwulorah, veteran teacher-catechist in Dunukofia Parish. He is about 70 years old and became a catechist in Umudioka in 1940. The incident was his own personal experience.

90. A. Ojukwu, a catechist in St. John Cross Church, Nnewi. Interviewed on 18 March 1984 at Nnewi.

91. S.I. Nnoruka, "The advent of the Catholic Church in Dunukofia: Its growth in Umudioka Town, 1913-1982" (unpublished B.D. dissertation, Bigard Seminary Enugu, 1982), p. 86.

92. A. U. Unigwe. Interviewed on 22 August 1983.

93. J. Shanahan, "How the native Catechist helps," Missionary Annals (June 1921).

94. F.C. Ekechi, Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland, 1857-1914, London: Frank Cass, 1972, p. 160.

95. Derrick, op. cit., p. 70.

CHAPTER THREE

1. In Calabar there was an organisation of Catholic teachers but its objectives were limited to the material and spiritual welfare of teachers. (information from F. Okon - a veteran teacher, Uyo, 4 September 1984).

2. For information on the role of chief Ojiako Ezenne in Catholic Church growth in Adazi see Chapter One.

3. B.O. Ebunilo "A historical survey of the life and growth of St Andrew's Church, Adazi Nnukwu, 1912-1983," in The Dedication and Official Opening of St Andrew's Catholic Church Adazi Nnukwu (Adazi, 1938), p. 6.

4. See "A history of the Catholic Church in Awka Diocese" (unpublished article, History Commission Awka Diocese, 1984).

5. My informants include Chief A. U. Nwosu - son of Chief Nwosu Mbike (interviewed on 2 October 1983), Mr. G. Ndu - a pupil in Catholic School Achina at the time (interviewed on 2 October 1983) and Monsignor V. J. Madike - son of the catechist-teacher, Daniel I. Madike (interviewed at Onitsha, 28 May 1984). See also O.E. Ezenwa, "A biography of Chief Ogbuozobe of Achina," (unpublished N.C.E. project paper, College of Education Awka).

6. Father Bubendorf was a French priest.

7. "A history of the Catholic Church in Awka Diocese."
8. Ebunilo, op. cit., p. 11.
9. Francis Onyeneke of Ekwulobia was the Secretary of Awka District Catholic Union in the fifties. (Interviewed at Ekwulobia, 30 August 1983).
10. Archdiocesan Secretariat Onitsha Records (ASON): 'Adazi File'.
11. Holy Ghost Fathers' Archives (CSE) Paris: B/557A/03: Fr. Carron to Superior General, May 1958.
12. Elias Ebunilo, aged 65, is from Adazi-Nnukwu. He is a retired school-teacher and taught for many years in Adazi Parish. (Interviewed at Adazi, 19 May 1983).
13. For the account on Solomon Okaih see Chapter Two, and for Veronica Okaih see Chapter Five.
14. Southern Nigeria, which was a prefecture in 1889 under Father Joseph Lutz, became a vicariate under Bishop Shanahan in 1920.
15. Information from Mrs Christiana Onuorah, first child and daughter of P.H. Okolo (interviewed at Onitsha, 27 September 1983); also from Mr. I.I. Nwosu, a pupil in Standard Six (interviewed at Achina, 27 October 1983).
16. J.P. Jordan, "A great Ibo Catholic," Holy Ghost Fathers Missionary Annals, Vol. 42, No. 5(May 1959).
17. Francis Onyeneke (interviewed on 30 August 1983).
18. Figures are taken from 'Vicariate Apostolic of Onitsha-Owerri Sacred Returns, July 1 to June 30, 1944'. Cf: CSE: B/556/01.
19. Spokesman (Onitsha), 25 April 1947.
20. An informant, A.C. Dike, said the allegation was made by two teachers in Adazi who were dismissed from teaching by Fr. Liddane for some grave misconduct. (Interviewed at Onitsha, 5 April 1987).

21. ASON: 'Adazi File': Letter of Catholic Committees of Adazi Parish to Bishop Heerey, 23 June 1947.

22. ASON: 'Adazi File': Letter of Catholic Committees of Adazi to Spokesman, 10 June 1947.

23. The West African Pilot (Lagos), 2 October 1948.

24. The West African Pilot, 23 October 1948.

25. The West African Pilot, 28 October 1948.

26. B.U. Ilozumba, The Nigerian Catholic Herald (Lagos) 18 July 1947.

27. The Nigerian Catholic Herald, 3 October 1947.

28. Information on the early stages of the ADCU came mainly from some of its pioneer members, for example, P.E. Eze - a foundation member (interviewed at Achina, 2 September 1983), Elias Ezeamaechi - one-time Secretary of ADCU (interviewed at Awgbu, 30 August 1983).

29. Awka District Catholic Union: Rules and Regulations (Onitsha: Central Press, n.d.).

30. Figures taken from Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, Adazi, (ADCU) Files).

31. Although the ADCU continued its meetings long after 1970, that is, the end of the Nigerian Civil War, it was greatly weakened due to the reorganisation of the Catholic laity movement in Onitsha Archdiocese and other dioceses in Eastern Nigeria. See ASON: LAC/105/76/14: Archbishop Arinze to Secretary, ADCU, 21 June 1976.

32. ADCU Files: Report of Executive Committee Meeting, Adazi 15 February 1959.

33. Information by A.C. Dike, a frontline member of ADCU and contemporary of Martin Nwosu. Interviewed at Onitsha, 5 April 1987.

34. For the 'bestman policy' and native courts see S.N. Nwabara, Iboland (London, 1977), pp. 207- 210.

35. ASON: Resident, Onitsha Province to Bishop Heerey, 30 August 1945. OP. 269/582.

36. A. C. Dike (interviewed at Onitsha, 5 April 1987).

37. The pioneer officers of the ADCU included I. Obiekezie (First Vice-Chairman), L.N. Anwunah (Second Vice-Chairman) and E. Ezeamaechi (Assistant Secretary and later Secretary). They were all teachers.

38. The newly formed nationalist parties were very vocal in attacking the colonial powers for their neglect of matters related to workers' welfare. (See J. Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, London, 1971, pp. 288-289).

39. ADCU Files: Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting, Adazi, 21 November 1948.

40. Ibid., Minutes of Executive Committee, Adazi, 3 July 1949.

41. Ulo Akwukwo Nta Akara literally means 'school for eaters of bean-bread' - a type of food locally made from fried bean flour. The school is so-called because the children who attend it are enticed to do so by such gifts as Akara. Such schools were usually catchment schools for children who would later attend formal primary schools.

42. ADCU Files: Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting, Adazi, 24 August 1952.

43. Ibid., Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting, Adazi, 2 February 1958.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid., Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting, Adazi, 6 May 1951.

46. Ibid., Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting, Adazi, 24 July 1955.

47. Ibid., Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting,

Adazi, 16 September 1964.

48. My informants on Amanuke episode include Mrs Victoria Anyafulu (wife of John Anyafulu, who led the move to establish the Catholic Church in Amanuke), Cletus Ezike - the first Catholic catechist in Amanuke. Both were interviewed at Amanuke on 4 November 1983. See also J. Anyafulu, "History of the R.C.M. Church at Amanuke" (unpublished paper, 1979).

49. The origin and activities of the ENCC are treated in Chapter Four.

50. ADCU Files: Welcome Address to Rev. Fr. P.M. Muoh, 23 April 1973.

51. See C.I. Eke, "Priestly and Religious Vocations," in C.A. Obi (ed), A Hundred Years of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria, pp. 304-330. See also V.A. Nwosu (ed), The Catholic Church in Onitsha, Chapter 8.

52. J.E. Ukpo, "Statistical Data of the Catholic Church in Nigeria," in A.O. Makozi and G.A. Ojo (eds), The History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria (Macmillan, 1982), p.104.

53. Information from Rev. Father F. Ugwueze - ADCU chaplain, 1962-1976. (interviewed at Onitsha, 31 July 1984).

54. ADCU Files: Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting, Adazi, 16 September 1951.

55. Ibid., 1958 Election Report.

56. Ibid., Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting, 12 October 1958 and 26 April 1959.

57. See Chapter Six.

1. Some of the leaders of the ENCC from outside Awka Division interviewed claimed ignorance of its existence.

2. The ENCC was a much misunderstood movement of the Catholic laity. Non-Catholics regarded it as a political weapon of the clergy. The attitude of the clergy to it is examined in this chapter. On the ENCC and the UPE see D.B. Abernethy, The Political Dilemma of Popular Education (California: Standford University Press, 1969), ch. 7.

3. Originally, the Knights of St. Mulumba were called Knights of Blessed Mulumba until Mulumba was made a saint by the Catholic Church.

4. Information on the Knights of St. Mulumba came partly from interview with its founder, Rev. Fr. Anselm Ojefua at Ilah, 21 September, 1985.

5. Father Ojefua, 21 September 1985.

6. Ibid.

7. Father Eugene Uzukwu has made a strong case for the enthusiasm of Igbo Catholics for the knighthood. He said that the Igbo Catholics saw the knighthood as the counter-part of priestly or religious ordination. See Church and Inculturation: A Century of Roman Catholicism in Eastern Nigeria (Spiritan Booklets No. 1, Pacific Press, Obosi, 1985), pp. 21-23.

8. Ojefua, 21 September 1985.

9. Another Order of Catholic knighthood was introduced in Nigeria in 1976 through the help of Kevin Ejiogu of Ihiala and Bishop Godfrey Okoye of Enugu diocese. It is an international organisation with headquarters in the United States of America.

10. The table, compiled from Eastern House of Assembly Debates, is taken from E.C. Amucheazi's "Church and Politics in Eastern Nigeria, 1945-1966," (unpublished M.Sc, dissertation, University of Ibadan, 1972), p,37.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Eastern Nigeria: Ministry of Education - Directory of Elementary Schools, 1964.

14. Most of the leaders of the ENCC were pioneer members of the KSM. (Information from G.O.G. Ume-Ezeoke, one of the pioneer KSM members. Interviewed at Onitsha, 29 June 1984).

15. D.B. Abernethy, Church and State in Nigerian Education, (Ibadan: NISER, 1966), p. 19

16. See Eastern Region: Policy for Education (Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1953), Government Printer, Enugu, 1953. See also Abernethy, The Political Dilemma, pp. 161-2.

17. The Policy for Education deliberately avoided using the word "free" because it argued that "it is idle to pretend that education on such a large scale will not in fact cost money."

I8. Ibid. Note that the plan by the Colonial Government to involve Local Education Authorities in education management was first overtly made in 1947. (Cf. Memorandum on Educational Policy in Nigeria, Sessional Paper No. 20 of 1947).

19. The Apostolic Delegate to British Africa, Archbishop David Matthew had in March 1951 drawn the attention of the Nigerian bishops to government's proposal to secularize schools in the Gold Coast (Ghana) and Northern Rhodesia. See C.M. Cooke, "Church, state and education: The Eastern Nigeria experience, 1950-67," in E. Fasholé-Luke et als, (eds), Christianity in

Independent Africa, Rex Collins, London, 1978, pp. 194f.

20. See Divini Illius Magistri (The Catholic Education of Youth) in Selected Papal Encyclicals and Letters 1929-31, London, 1932

21. See Archives of Archdiocesan Secretariat Onitsha (ASON): "The Bishops' Joint Circular on Education," (mimeographed n.d.).

22. Ibid.

23. Other Christian Churches were not so vocal as the Catholic Church in challenging government policy on education. They seemed to welcome any policy which might curtail Catholic dominance in education in the East. See Abernethy, The Political Dilemma, p. 170.

24. Ibid. p. 162

25. Ibid.; see also A.E. Afigbo, "The mission, the state and education in South-Eastern Nigeria, 1956-71" in Christianity in Independent Africa, pp. 176-192.

26. See Eastern Nigeria: "Universal Primary Education - Statement of Policy and Procedure for the guidance of Education Offices, Local Government Councils and Voluntary Agencies," (ASON: mimeographed, 20 August, 1956).

27. This expression was believed to have been first used by C.C. Muojekwu, an Nnewi lawyer and a Protestant. (Information from J.M. Nwosu, President of ENCC. Interviewed on 4 August, 1984).

28. A.C. Dike, Secretary of ENCC Onitsha Urban Parishes. (Interviewed on 30 October, 1984)

29. G.O.G. Ume-Ezeoke. (Interviewed at Onitsha, 22 October, 1984).

30. ASON: ENCC Files, Minutes of the Inaugural meeting of ENCC, 18 January, 1957.

31. For more on P. H. Okolo see Chapter Three, p.129

32. J. M. Nwosu has no relationship with the present writer.

33. ASCN: "Convention of Protestant Citizens of Nigeria: What does it mean?" (mimeographed, C.M.S. Onitsha, 1957).

34. The ENCC published a special monthly periodical - The ENCC Bulletin, Onitsha, The CPC had a weekly newsletter called The Eastern Star (Onitsha).

35. See Reply by the ENCC to a Memorandum put up by the Diocesan Directors of the Lay Apostolate, Eastern Provinces, 21 May 1966, ASON.

36. The Archbishop's speech was actually a response to the church members' request for more Catholic schools and hospitals. The Archbishop said it was very difficult to get land from the Ministry of Town and Country Planning. Cf. ENCC, On/210.

37. Eastern Observer (Port Harcourt), 23 January 1962.

38. The Leader, a Catholic newspaper. On the day of the 1957 elections (15 March 1957) it carried an Editorial calling on Catholics to contest the education issue through the ballot.

39. ASON: ENCC Files, 1957 Elections,

40. A case in point is J.M. Nwosu, the President of ENCC, who stood as independent candidate against his Protestant rival, Ejike Chidolue (a party candidate), and won. (Interview with J.M. Nwosu, 4 August 1984).

41. Okwo-nma in Igbo means one who will resort to fighting, if need be, to make his point or win a case. J.M. Nwosu was a powerful and fearless speaker.

42. A.C. Dike. (Interviewed on 30 October 1984).

43. Translated, it means, "My people, I am no

literate person but I will serve God with what other gifts I have. Let us all fight for God. Those who mock me for being unable to read and write will be tied down to their books whilst I use my energy and blows to win the battle for God." This statement was confirmed by many of my informants.

44. In May 1965 the ENCC began to publish a special newsletter to disseminate its views.

45. ENCC leaders included renowned Catholic teachers like P.H. Okolo, P. Anaekwe, W. Onuchukwu and P.E. Chukwurah.

46. The CTA was formally inaugurated at Onitsha on 2 July, 1965, to fight teachers' cause in education. (Information from V.A. Emenogha, first President of CTA. Interviewed at Onitsha, 1 December, 1984). See also The ENCC Bulletin, 1, 5, (October-November 1965) p. 3.

47. ASON: ENCC Files, Minutes of Special Emergency Meeting, Holy Trinity Onitsha, 5 July 1958.

48. From G.O.G. Ume-Ezeoke's private papers.

49. Monsignor M. Eneja (now Bishop of Enugu Diocese) was the chaplain of ENCC from 1961 to 1970. (Interviewed at Enugu, 30 August, 1984).

50. This was confirmed by many of my informants.

51. Voluntary donation from members was the main source of fund for the ENCC. Not many members paid the annual dues of six-pence, one shilling, and three-pence for women, men and children respectively. (See A.N. Okono, Facts About ENCC (Onitsha, 1964).

52. See Abernethy, The Political Dilemma of Popular Education, ch. 7.

53. Ume-Ezeoke; interviewed on 22 October, 1984.

54. Such rallies were common in the major towns like Port-Harcourt and Onitsha. They took place on the

average of once a month.

55. The ENCC did not award many scholarships due to lack of fund. (Information from A.N. Okono, Administrative Secretary of ENCC. Interviewed on 4 April, 1982)

56. ASON: ENCC Files, Okono to Headmasters of Catholic Schools, Onitsha Archdiocese, 17 February, 1966.

57. Many people interviewed said they were not registered members of the ENCC but were sympathetic to its cause. Some regarded it as just another form of Catholic action, though militant and desirable at the time.

58. Cooke, op. cit. p. 200.

59. ASON: ENCC Files, Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of ENCC 18 January, 1957.

60. Monsignor M. Maduka; interviewed at Ekwulobia on 9 April 1986.

61. Information from Gabriel A.O. Eze; interviewed at Ngwo, 8 August 1984.

62. Ibid.

63. The Nigeria Catholic Directory 1965 (Lagos).

64. The Nigeria Catholic Directory 1967 (Lagos)

65. Maduka, 9 April 1986.

66. Ibid.

67. ASON: ENCC Files, Minutes of the Executive Committee of ENCC Onitsha, 18 July 1957.

68. A case of loss of ENCC money in Adazi was cited. The money (£70. 3s. 4d). was stolen from the parish office. The ENCC blamed it on the delay by the parish in remitting the money to the parent body at Onitsha. (See ENCC Files, Parish Priest, Adazi to Okono, 28 May, 1965).

69. ENCC Files, Minutes of Working Committee,

19 September 1965.

70. The parish priest of Umunze was once singled out for special praise by the ENCC for cooperating with its visitation team. (See ENCC Files, Minutes of Working Committee, Onitsha, 22 July, 1965).

71. In 1965 seven out of the eight Directors of Catholic Action (Lay Apostolate) in the eight dioceses in Eastern Region of Nigeria were white priests. The only African was Rev. Fr. John Ogbonna of Umuahia diocese. See Nigeria Catholic Directory 1965 (Lagos)

72. ENCC Files, "Memorandum of the Diocesan Directors of the Lay Apostolate, Eastern Provinces, 1966".

73. Ibid., "Reply by the ENCC to a Memorandum put up by Diocesan Directors of the Lay Apostolate, Eastern Provinces, 21 May 1966".

74. Ibid., p. 3.

75. See J.M. Nwosu's private file: Minutes of the Commission appointed by the Hierarchy of the Eastern Provinces of Nigeria to study the affairs of the ENCC, 21 May 1966.

76. Members of the Committee were Rev. Fr. J. Ogbonna, Mr. D.O. Nwosu and Mr. F.O. Anyaegbunam.

77. J.M. Nwosu's private file: "Summary of Minutes of the Commission set up by the Bishops of the Eastern Provinces to examine the future and financial problems of the ENCC".

78. A. Flannery, (ed), Vatican Council II, "Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People," (Dublin; Dominican Publications, 1980 ed.) pp. 766f.

79. The ENCC ceased to function at the end of the Nigerian Civil War (1970). A New Catholic laity organization was formed.

80. J.M. Nwosu, interviewed on 4 August 1984.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. See, for instance, S.N, Ezeanya, "Women in traditional religion," Orita, 10,11 (December, 1976), pp. 103-121.

2. In parts of Igboland with institutionalized monarchical systems of government women have greater political and therefore religious power. See, for instance, Omu (Queen) in Onitsha Igbo society in, R.N. Henderson The King in Every Man, Yale University Press, London, 1972, ch. 8.

3. G.T. Basden, Niger Ibos, Frank Cass, London, 1966, p. 208. Note that the clay cones and pots symbolized her gods.

4. Ezeanya, op. cit., p. 109.

5. Mrs. Regina Okafor, leader of Catholic women, Awka Diocese. The information came from an interview with her mother-in-law, aged over 70 years. It was communicated to me on 6 April, 1982.

6. For a good analysis of some of the problems connected with women's education in Nigeria, especially as it affected the Christian churches in the past see M.C. Magdalen, "Education of Girls in Southern Nigeria," International Review of the Missions, 17, (July 1928), pp. 505-514.

7. Basden, op. cit., p. 203.

8. For a brief account of colonial effort at girls' education see N.E. Mba, Nigerian Women Mobilized, Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1982, pp.62 - 66

9. Figures taken from Holy Ghost Fathers' Archives (C.S.E) Paris: B192/A/04.

10. C.S.E. B/556/01: Onitsha-Owerri Vicariate, July 1947 - July 1948.

11. On the use of schools as a strategy for conversion

by the Holy Ghost Fathers see J.P. Jordan, Bishop Shanahan of Southern Nigeria (1971 ed.).

12. According to Catholic teaching and legislation, especially for the mission countries, anyone desiring to become a Christian must undergo a period of probation and special preparation which include special courses in the essentials of Christian life, a rejection or parting with heathen beliefs and practices, and an acquisition of Christian virtues. This period is known as the catechumenate. Depending on the current legislation, it usually lasted from two to three or more years, depending on the aspirant's background and the progress he or she made in acquiring Christian knowledge. For the situation in Southern Nigeria in the twenties see "Circular Letter No. 10 of August, 1924 for the Vicariate Apostolic of Southern Nigeria," C.S.E., B.554/05.

13. Magdalen, op. cit., p.511. Sister Mary Magdalen was a Catholic missionary nun who worked tirelessly in promoting girls' education in parts of Southeastern Nigeria, especially in Calabar area. For more on her activities see C. Cooke, Mary Charles Walker: the Nun of Calabar, Four Courts Press, Dublin, 1980. See also Father Biechy, "In Dienste der Frau," (C.S.E., B/553/08), pp. 150-152, for more on the problems of the education of girls.

14. See, for instance, the case of Rev. Father Tansi and his women's training centre in Dunukofia, in E. Isichei, Entirely for God, Macmillan, 1980, ch. 6.

15. Information on Ama Nwanyi (literally "Women's ground") and Anglican Women's Guild came mainly from interview with Archdeacon C.A. Mbonu (Christ Church, Onitsha, 21 September 1984) and Archdeacon

S.O. Ugwuayi (St. Paul's Church, Nsukka, 20 December, 1984) and their wives. Both Anglican priests were formerly organizers of the laity in the Anglican Church.

16. The first nuns (Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, France) arrived in Southeast Nigeria to join in mission work on 15 November, 1889. Thereafter many sisters have been working along-side priests there. (Cf. H.A. Adigwe, "The beginning of the Catholic Church among the Ibos of South-eastern Nigeria, 1885-1930," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Vienna University, 1966, pp. 224-228).

17. There are many works on the activities of sisters in Southeast Nigeria. See, for instance, C.M. Cooke, op. cit.; Congregation of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Nigeria: A Historical Sketch (I.H.M. Publication, Enugu, 1974), Silver Sheaves (Holy Rosary Sisters Publication, Killeshandra, 1949); R.C. Onochie, The Impact of Igbo Women on the Church in Igboland, (Roma, 1979).

18. Silver Sheaves, p. 64.

19. J. Adigweme, "Bishop Shanahan and the achievement of Ibo women," in J.C. Okoye (ed), Bishop Shanahan (Onitsha: Tabansi Press, 1971), p. 51.

20. Mrs. A. C. Nwagbogu, "The First Catholic Teacher Training College for Women in Igboland," (unpublished article, Onitsha, 1983). The college was established in Onitsha in 1935, moved to Ihiala and finally to Enugu. Mrs. Nwagbogu was a student of the college in the forties.

21. They are fondly called Ndi Nne Uka (church mothers) by the younger women who revere them for their age, experience and steadfastness in the faith.

22. This account of Mrs. Veronica Okaih comes mainly from information from her eldest daughter, Bertha (interviewed on 29 April, 1985), and Mrs. Philomena Nwosu of Achina (interviewed at Achina,

27 August, 1983) and Mrs, Bridget Isidienu (interviewed at Nteje, 13 April, 1983). Both Philomena and Bridget were pupils at Mrs. Okaih's training centre. Each of them is more than sixty-five years old.

23. Adazi Parish was very large and contained at one time more than 60 towns. A special house to accommodate the girls was built in Adazi.

24. Some of the girls did not attain the age of puberty before coming to the centre.

25. Mrs, Philomena Nwosu - a former pupil of Veronica and mother of the present writer. (interviewed at Achina, 27 August, 1983). Veronica was fondly called "Mama" by most of her former pupils.

26. Instances of such houses abound in many parishes. For example, Dunukofia, which was opened in 1940, had such houses. Here women like Mrs. Christiana Odenigbo, Mrs. Maria Madike, ran training centres for young women. (Information from Mrs. Christiana Odenigbo, Mrs. Mary Okafor and Mrs. Cecilia Udeogalanya - interviewed on 17 August, 1983). See also Isichei, Entirely for God, pp. 46-47. (Mary Okafor was a pupil in Mrs. Christiana's house)

27. Holy Ghost Fathers Missionary Annals (Dublin), September 1949.

28. Formal training institutes were established in Dunukofia, Ihiala, Adazi and some other central parishes with Sisters' Convent. For instance, the Holy Rosary Sisters established a marriage training centre in Ihiala in 1939. See Congregation of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Nigeria, p. 16

29. The organisation and activities of such women groups among the Igbo at village and other levels have been discussed in detail by many scholars.

See S. Leith-Ross, African Women, (London: Faber and Faber, 1939); M.M. Green, Igbo Village Affair, (London: Frank Cass, 1964); S.J. Harris, "The position of women in Nigerian society," Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 2 (1940).

30. Mrs. Regina Okafor, interviewed on 6 June 1982. Mrs. Okafor is Director of Catholic Women Organisation, Awka Diocese.

31. Information on the Christian Mothers' Association (CMA) came from interview with Madam Felicia Iwuorah, a member of the CMA since 1945 and now its President-General under its new name - St Anne's Society, in Onitsha Archdiocese. (Interviewed on 8 September 1987 at Onitsha).

32. Devotion to St Anne - the protectress of Christian families, was already widespread in many parts of the world, especially in Quebec, Canada. See Annals of Saint Anne de Beaupré - a monthly magazine, published by the Redemptorist Fathers on behalf of the Shrine of St Anne de Beaupré, Quebec, Canada.

33. Madam Felicia Iwuorah - personal communication, 8 September 1987.

34. For more on Catholic women as a pressure group during the UPE crisis in Eastern Nigeria see Nigerian Women Mobilized, pp.118-134.

35. See Chapter Four for a detailed account of the E.N.C.C.

36. Nina Mba proved this almost conclusively in her Nigerian Women Mobilized. In her words, "The obvious conclusion to be drawn is that women were most independent when they mobilized through their own separate communal and market associations. When they belonged to an organisation or institution along with men, they were less autonomous " (p. 292-293).

37. This partly explains why the missionaries were anxious to establish as soon as possible native sisterhood as a means of reaching the women. See M.L. Okure, Centenary Reflection: A Tribute to Sr, Mary Charles Walker, Claverianum Press, Ibadan, 1981; also Congregation of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Nigeria.

38. Interview with Mrs. V. Okoye, 29 March 1985; see also C. N. Obiamiwe, "Short History of the Council of Catholic Women's organisation Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province," in The Hour of Women (Onitsha, 1975), pp. 28-29.

39. Mrs. Victoria Okoye, interviewed on 29 March, 1985.

40. See "The Growth and Structure of the Catholic Women's Organisation", in H.A. Joe-Adigwe and V.V.I. Okoye (eds), Women, Justice and Evangelisation (Onitsha: Archdiocesan Secretariat, 1980), p. 8.

41. Nina Mba, op. cit., p. 121.

42. Ibid., p. 121.

43. Ibid., p. 121.

44. The Nigerian Catholic Herald, 14-20 December 1956.

45. ASON: "Memorandum from women of Onitsha Northern District to the Prime Minister of the Eastern Region, the Minister of Education and the Onitsha Northern District Council," December 1956. Leader, 12 January 1957.

46. The new U.P.E. policy allowed for the building of only Council (or Local Authority) school, wherever there was need for more schools to accomodate pupils who could not be admitted in existing Voluntary agency schools. Council schools were generally substandard, ill- managed and interdenominational. Opposition to them arose partly on these grounds. CF. L. Ladenegan,

"East Primary Education Scheme: The background to Catholic opposition," Daily Times (Lagos), 1 December, 1956.

47. ASON: Letter - Town Clerk to Secretary, RCM Onitsha, 1 November, 1956. Ref. 247/3/131

48. ASON: Letter - Father Daly to Town Clerk, 7 November 1956.

49. ASON: Letter - Onitsha Catholic Women to Chairman and Councillors, Onitsha Urban District Council, 16 November 1956. (N.B. The letter was signed by two representatives from each of the four Catholic parishes in the town.)

50. Bulletin de la Congrégation (Paris), XLV, 671, p. 66 see also The Leader, 26 January 1957.

51. ASON: "Statement on the Universal Primary Education Scheme by the Honorable Premier of the Eastern Region," (Mimeographed, 10 December, 1956); also Daily Times (Lagos), 11 December., 1956.

52. The Leader, 9 February 1957.

53. Daily Times, 19 and 29 November 1956.

54. Adigwe and Okoye, op. cit. p. 10

55. The E.N.C.C. mentioned this action of the church hierarchy in creating an independent and autonomous women's organisation as one of its grievances against the clergy. See ASON: "Reply by the ENCC to the memorandum put up by the Diocesan Directors of the Lay Apostolate, Eastern Provinces."

56. Mrs. Okoye, interviewed on 29 March 1985.

57. Some of these associations were largely devoted to prayers, mutual help of members and works of charity. They usually had a large percentage of female members.

58. The policy Mrs. Okoye adopted was that any church association having as many as twenty-five female members should affiliate with the new women's organisation.

59. Mrs. Okoye however admitted receiving help later from some leaders of St. Anne's Society. (Interview, 29 March, 1985).

60. It is important to stress that the OACCWO did not eliminate any existing women's association.

61. Adigwe and Okoye, op. cit., p. 13.

62. The crisis was caused by Government's decision to reduce the primary school course from eight to six years and to introduce a common religious syllabus. For a detailed study of Government's action as well as the people's reaction, especially the women, see The Political Dilemma of Popular Education, ch. 7; also Mba, op. cit., pp. 130 -134.

63. ASON: "Resolution passed by a mass rally of the old Onitsha Province held on 11 December 1963 at the Government field Onitsha." (ON/210: ENCC Secretariat Files, Onitsha).

64. Daily Express (Lagos), 15 February 1964.

65. Information from two Catholic women leaders: Mrs. C. Okolo, Secretary of ENCC Women's Wing Onitsha - interviewed on 29 March 1982; Mrs. B. Ume-ezeoke, Vice-Chairman (and later President) of ENCC Women's Wing, Onitsha - interviewed at Onitsha, 9 March 1982. Mrs. Ume-Ezeoke also made available to me some records of the organisation.

66. This is a customary sign of peace used by the Igbo people.

67. The women estimated the number to be about 10,000.

68. Mrs. Ume-Ezeoke was the informant.

69. Daily Times (Lagos), 1 May 1964; also Daily Express (Lagos) 30 April 1964.

70. See "Petition of Representatives of the Catholic Mothers of Eastern Nigeria to the Premier of Eastern Nigeria, Dr. the Hon. M.I. Okpara" (ENCC Secretariat Files, Onitsha).

71. E.C. Amucheazi, "Church and Politics in Eastern Nigeria 1945-1960," unpublished M. Sc. Dissertation, Ibadan University, 1972, p. 237

72. H.E. Wolpe, "Port Harcourt, a community of strangers: the politics of urban development in Eastern Nigeria", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology 1967 p. 497.

73. Cited in the Catholic women's rejoinder to Hon. Mrs. Margaret Ekpo - "Eastern Nigeria Catholic Women's Wing, Onitsha Archdiocese replies to Hon. Margaret Ekpo on her speech in the House of Assembly, 24 March 1964", See ASON: ENCC ON/210; also Eastern Observer, 27 April, 1964

74. Ibid.

75. Nigerian Outlook (Enugu), 16 April 1964.

76. In May 1965 the E.N.C.C. began to publish a special newsletter - The ENCC Bulletin, which helped to spread its views. On 15 June 1965 a special seminar was organised by the Institute of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka at the request of the Government to consider ways of implementing the recommendations of the National Joint Negotiating Council for Teachers. The Nsukka Seminar recommended a complete state system of education for the Region. See ASON: Iroanya to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Enugu, 18 June 1965.

CHAPTER SIX

1. Following the secession of the former Eastern Region of Nigeria on 30 May, 1967, which declared itself the Republic of Biafra, Nigeria was engulfed in a bloody civil war which began on 6 July, 1967 and ended on 12 January, 1970. There are many publications on the Nigerian Civil War. See, for instance, A. A. Madiebo, The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran War, (Fourth Dimension Publishers, Enugu, 1980).

2. See East-Central State of Nigeria: Public Education Edict 1970 (Edict No. 2 of 1971), Enugu, Government Printer. The announcement of the take-over of schools was first made on 15 January - three days after the civil war had ended. The seizure of church institutions was not peculiar to Nigeria. It was a common feature in church-state conflict in the late 1960s and early 1970s. See A. Hastings, A History of African Christianity 1950-1975. (Cambridge, 1979), Ch. 4.

3. F. Forsyth, Emeka, (Spectrum Books, Ibadan, 1982). pp. 81-82.

4. There were about 162 towns in Awka and Onitsha Provinces of Onitsha Archdiocese at the time.

5. ARCHON: Fr. Woulfe to Fr. Madike, 29 October, 1968; F/24/1.

6. About 105 Catholic missionaries, mainly from the East-Central State of Nigeria, were deported from Nigeria in 1970. See Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN). Lagos: Secretary-General to the Ordinaries, 13 April, 1970.

7. The Official Nigeria Catholic Directory, 1967, (African University Press, Lagos, 1967, p. 103).

8. See Guida delle Missioni Catholiche, 1970, and

reproduced in The Official Nigeria Catholic Directory 1973 (Evans Brothers Ltd., Lagos) p.135

9. By 1964, out of the 5,986 primary schools in Eastern Nigeria the Catholic Church owned 2,406. See Eastern Nigeria Ministry of Education: Directory of Elementary Schools 1964, (Government Printer, Enugu, 1965).

10. Catholic Bishops of the East-Central State of Nigeria, Education: 1971 Easter Joint Pastoral Letter (Tabansi Press, Onitsha, 1971), p.14.

11. In the course of this study the writer sent a questionnaire titled "The Role of Voluntary Agencies (The Christian Missions) in Education in Eastern Nigeria" to 150 persons, including teachers, students and civil servants to ascertain their views on Christian Missions' management of schools vis-a-vis State control.

12. The survey was conducted by this writer in September 1983.

13. Information on salary of catechists and other church lay workers came mainly from Rev. Monsignor F. Ugwueze, Chairman of Church Personnel Maintenance Commission. (Interviewed on 7 December 1986). Also interviewed was Rev. Fr. G. C. Ikeobi, Director of Catechetics. (Interviewed on 12 January., 1987).

14. Figures are from Monsignor Ugwueze's private files.

15. In the State civil service, after the Udoji Salary Review of 1974, the lowest paid worker received ₦720.00 a year.

16. The Archdiocesan Pastoral Council was inaugurated at Onitsha in 1971. It is the highest policy-making body in the Church in the Archdiocese.

17. "Catechists and their Scale of salary" - a Memorandum by Onitsha Archdiocesan Catechists' Association to the Pastoral Council Onitsha, 25 November, 1981. (Cf. Monsignor Ugwueze's private files on Personnel Management).

18. Ibid.

19. Augustine Akogu - a catechist, aged 46. (Interviewed on 12 August, 1983)

20. The first Director of Catechetics was Rev. Fr. Godwin C. Ikeobi. Most of the information on the training of catechists came from him. (Interviewed at Onitsha, 16 June 1983).

21. The dress consisted of a purple cassock and a white laced surplice won over the cassock.

22. Bernard N. Nwabueze - catechist since 1963. Interviewed at Ogidi, 3 September 1983.

23. Rev. Fr. G. C. Ikeobi, interviewed on 16 June 1983.

24. Gabriel G. Aniekwe - aged 48, catechist of Ifite-Ogwarri. (Interviewed on 23 September 1983).

25. The scarcity of priests which was noticeable immediately after the civil war soon gave way to a period of vocation boom in many parts of Igbo-land from the mid-seventies. Cf. C.I. Eke, "The Development of Seminaries in Eastern Nigeria, 1924-19742, (unpublished M.A. dissertation, S.O.A.S., University of London, 1983); A. Onyeneke, "Une Explosion" in Vocation a travers Lemonde, No 272, (October 1975); Bigard Memorial Seminary Enugu, Golden Jubilee 1924-1974, (Owerri: Assumpta Press, 1974).

26. The Bible Society began in the Archdiocese of Onitsha in the last few years and draws into its fold young men and women who are eager to deepen their

knowledge of the bible. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement began in the Archdiocese in October 1975. Members, mainly young lay men and women, today number over 20,000. (Information given by Rev. Monsignor M. Obiukwu - founder of the Charismatic Renewal Movement in Onitsha Archdiocese. Interviewed at Onitsha, 7 December, 1986).

27. E. Ikenga-Metuh and C. Ejizu, Hundred Years of Catholicism in Eastern Nigeria 1885-1985: The Nnewi Story (Asele Institute, Nimo, 1985), p.147.

28. L. Mbefo, "Priest-Catechist Relationship," The Torch (Enugu), 81, December 1985, p. 34.

29. The Catholic bishops of the then East Central State of Nigeria sometimes alone, sometimes jointly with Church leaders of other Christian churches, wrote several petitions to the State Government demanding the return of schools or criticizing some aspects of the Government's new education policy. See, for instance, Education: 1971 Easter Joint Pastoral Letter; Letter of Christian Church Leaders to Ukpabi Asika, Administrator of East Central State of Nigeria, 6 April 1973 (Holy Ghost Fathers' Archives, Dublin).

30. Information from Mrs. Regina Okafor, Director of Catholic Women's Organisation, Awka Diocese. (Interviewed on 30 January, 1982).

31. Nigeria remained under military rule from the end of the civil war (1970) to 30th September, 1979.

32. See The Council of Catholic Women's Organisations, Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province - Letter to Governor, Imo State, (ASON/IB 21 May 1981).

33. Universal fee-free primary education was re-introduced for the whole of Nigeria by the Federal Military Government in September 1976. During the military regime school enrolment grew from 3.7

million in 1970 to 9.5-10 million in 1977. See A. Kirk-Green and D. Rimmer, Nigeria since 1970, (Hodder and Stroughton, London, 1981), pp. 114-117.

34. A. E. Afigbo, "The missions, the State and education in South-Eastern Nigeria, 1956-71," in E. Fasholé-Luke (ed), Christianity in Independent Africa, (Rex Collins, London 1978), p. 191.

35. Hastings, op. cit., p. 189.

36. ASON: LAC/71/1 - "Circular letter to all Priests, Religious and People of Onitsha Archdiocese on the Consitution of Archdiocesan Lay Apostolate Councils," 11 April 1971.

37. The National Laity Council of Nigeria was formed in Lagos on 15 March 1973 to coordinate the activities of the Catholic Laity throughout Nigeria. Laity Councils were formed in many other dioceses.

38. Part of the post-civil war church re-organisation in Onitsha Archdiocese was the formation of a governing council in each parish (parish council) and the Pastoral Council (at the Archdiocesan centre). Cf. ASON: PAC/70/1 - "Circular letter to all Priests, Religious and People of Onitsha Archdiocese on the Constitution of Parish Councils."

39. J.M. Nwosu, personal communication, 4 August, 1982.

40. The first post-war seminar at the Archdiocesan level was held at Onitsha from 13th to 15th October, 1972. Earlier seminars were organized in Nnobi (1965). Ihiala (1965), Njikoka (1966), Onitsha (1967), Orumba (1968), Adazi (1970), Awka (1971), Aguata (1971) and Nnewi (1971). These were the main zones of the Catholic

Women's Organisation. See V.V.I. Okoye (ed), Who's Who and the Structure of Onitsha Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women Leadership Seminar, (Assumpta Press, Owerri, 1972).

41. ASON: Archbishop F.A. Arinze, "Message to the October 1972 Leadership Seminar of the Onitsha Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women".

42. V.V.I. Okoye, "The role of women in evangelization," in H.A. Joe-Adigwe and V.V.I. Okoye (eds), Women, Justice and Evangelization (Onitsha, 1980), p. 40. Note similar acquisition of leadership role in the church by women in Sierra Leone. See F. C. Steady, "The role of women in the churches in Freetown, Sierra Leone," in E. Fashole-Luke et al . (eds), Christianity in Independent Africa (London, 1978), pp.151-163.

43. This writer is aware of many such women who visited schools in Onitsha and taught catechism to pupils on a voluntary basis.

44. Before the creation of Awka Diocese in 1977 there were 13 zones of the C.W.O. in Onitsha Archdiocese.

45. H.A. Adigwe and V.V.I. Okoye (eds), Women, Justice and Evangelisation, (Onitsha, 1980). pp. 25-29.

46. V.V.I. Okoye, Bethany House (Onitsha, 1984).

47. For pastoral administrative convenience the Catholic Church in Nigeria is divided into three Provinces which are coterminus with the former three regions of Nigeria - Northern, Western and Eastern. The headquarters are in Kaduna, Lagos and Onitsha respectively.

48. Cf. The Hour of Women (Onitsha: Ekpechi Press, 1975).

49. Most of the information on the activities of Catholic women in the matter of government take-over of mission schools came from Mrs. Regina

Okafor, former Assistant Director of C.W.O. in Onitsha Archdiocese and now Director of C.W.O. Awka Diocese. (Interviewed on June 6, 1982).

50. Ibid.

51. Daily Star (Enugu), 28 February, 1985; also 11 October, 1986.

52. See "An Address by the Catholic Women's Organisations, Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province at a Dialogue between them and the Nigerian Union of Teachers Anambra State Wing," 8 September 1981, (mimeographed, Awka, 1981).

53. ASON: Memorandum by Catholic Teachers' Association, Anambra and Imo States to Catholic Bishops of Anambra and Imo States, 19 August, 1981.

54. "The stand of Catholic Teachers' Association Onitsha Archdiocese on State handover of some schools to the churches," Daily Star 25 August. 1981.

55. Before the state take-over of schools in 1970 Catholic schools were more numerous in Anambra and Imo States than schools owned by other Christian Churches. Hence opposition to the take-over was strongest in these two states than in others.

56. ASON: The Council of Catholic Women's Organisation, Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province - Letter to Governor of Anambra State, 12 October 1981.

57. Madam Christy Okolo, organiser of CWO, personal communication, 1st July 1982. Confirmed by Mrs Bertha Ume-Ezeoke, President of CWO, 20 December 1982.

58. Radio/Television interviews of Dr Akanu Ibiam.

59. Madam V.V.I. Okoye, Director of CWO, personal communication, 29 March 1985.

60. Information from Rev. Monsignor H. A. Adigwe,

Chaplain of CWO, 15 December 1983.

61. See Anambra State of Nigeria: Public Education (Transfer of Schools - Special Provisions) Law, No. 4 of 1983. Two colleges were returned each to the Catholic Church and the CMS Church.

62. On 31st December 1983 the Government of Shehu Shagari was overthrown by the army.

63. This movement came to the notice of the present writer in 1971, shortly after the civil war when he became the Director of Lay Apostolate in the Archdiocese of Onitsha. He has since undertaken a research on it. The result was published in Christ to the World (Rome) XX, 4, (1975), pp. 249-252.

64. Some people claim it started in Aba. (Bishop A.G. Nwedo of Umuahia, personal communication, 18 June 1973).

65. P.E. Chukwurah, personal communication, 18 October 1973.

66. Nwedo, personal communication, 18 June 1973.

67. On the significance of the rosary and other Marian cults as Catholic rituals not requiring the presence of a priest see Richard Gray, The Cambridge History of Africa, vol. 7 (1986), p. 168.

68. For the story of Our Lady of Fatima see J. Da Cruz, More About Fatima (Castelbranco, Spain, 1975).

69. See V.A. Nwosu (ed), Constitution and Prayer of the Block Rosary (Onitsha, 1975) p. 27.

70. I.R.A. Ozigboh argued that the Catholic Church should look inwardly for alternatives to the school as a means of proselytisation. See his book Igbo Catholicism: The Onitsha Connection, 1967-1984 (Africana-Fep, Onitsha, 1985), p. 93.

71. For more on chieftaincy see G.I. Jones, "Chieftaincy in the former Eastern Nigeria," in

M. Crowder and O. Ikime (eds), West African Chiefs, (University of Ife Press, Ile-Ife, 1970) pp.312-324.

72. Ibid.

73. See Alor People's Convention - the Constitution and the Traditional Titles Regulations (Bizeduce Inter. Agencies, Emene-Enugu, 1972), p. 18. Also interview with Igwe S.N. Okonkwo of Alor, 7 November 1986 at Onitsha.

74. Ibid., p. 21.

75. See Chapter 3 above for an account of Chief Ojiako Ezenne.

76. Chief Michael Ojiako - the Adama of Adazi. (Interviewed at Adazi Nnukwu, 19 December 1985).

77. Cf. ASON: Titles, F/118. See also F.A. Arinze, "Instructions on Catholics and Title-taking," 25 January 1973.

78. Anambra State Broadcasting Service: Social Clubs in Anambra State, (Enugu: ABS Publication, 1983). In 1982 there were about 1600 registered Social Clubs in Anambra State.

79. R.N. Henderson, The King in Every Man (Yale University Press, 1972), pp. 270, 396-399.

80. See Festac '77, The Black and African World, (London: African Journal Ltd, 1977), p.8

81. Archbishop F.A. Arinze, "The Church and Nigerian Culture, 1973, " Living Our Faith (Tabansi Press, Onitsha, 1983), p. 56.

82. P.N.O. Ejiofor, Cultural Revival in Igboland (University Publishing Co., Onitsha, 1984), pp. 37-38

83. Social clubs have so far not come into a major conflict with the Church. A possible area of conflict is funeral rites due to certain objectionable actions performed by some

club members. For instance, their practice of pouring wine libations on the grave of deceased members appears to Catholics as a return to "pagan" rites.

84. See Chapter One above.

85. ASON: F/118 - Minutes of the Title-taking Committee Meeting, St Mary's Parish Onitsha, 31 March 1973.

86. F.O. Nwokedi, "The Christian and the Onitsha Ozo Title Institution" (n,d.). ASON: F/118

87. The Obi (king) of Onitsha, Igwe Okechukwu Ofala Okagbue confirmed this uncompromising stand over Ozo title in an interview with the writer. (Interviewed in Onitsha, 7 November 1986).

88. See Regulations on Marriage and Funeral Rites in Onitsha, by the Obi and Council, (Onitsha: Omenye Press, 1979).

89. Ibid., Preamble.

90. Interview with Monsignor G.A. Onuorah, Parish Priest of St Mary's Church, Onitsha, 1st December, 1986.

91. See, Umuoji Cultural Modification 1986, (Umuoji Improvement Union Nigeria Publication, 1986)

92. Ibid., Sect. 6, p. 12.

93. Ibid., Sect. 4(i), p. 8.

94. Ibid., Sect. 2.8c, p. 6.

95. Igwe M.A. Nweze, personal communication, Onitsha, 13 November 1986.

96. Ibid. According to Igwe Nweze the negotiation between the Catholic Church and the Ozo titled men took place before 1973; that between the Anglicans and the Ozo titled men was in 1986.

97. Nigeria, like many other Third World countries, experienced grave economic setback from the eighties.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY

1. The Catholic Church came in the wake of both the Presbyterian Church and the Church Missionary Society in the race to evangelize South-eastern Nigeria. In Igboland she was 28 years behind the CMS. Cf. F. K. Ekechi, Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland 1857 - 1914, p.93 ff.

2. By 1964, out of the almost 6,000 primary schools in Eastern Nigeria the Catholic Church alone owned and managed about 2,500. Nine other Christian Missions plus the government shared the rest. See Eastern Nigeria: Directory of Elementary Schools, 1964 (Government Printer, Enugu 1965).

3. See Population Census of Eastern Region of Nigeria 1953, Table C (West Cameroons inclusive), Census Superintendent, (CMS press, Port Harcourt).

4. See Catholic Church (Nigeria) Press Department of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria: The Catholic Church in Nigeria, October 1960 (Lagos: Times Press, 1960). See also J.H. Price, "The Eastern Region of Nigeria, March 1957," in W. J. M. Mackenzie and K. E. Robinson (eds), Five Elections in Africa (Oxford University Press, 1960).

5. This proverb expresses some truth about the oil-bean tree, the seeds of which are used for making Igbo food called Ukpaka. The leaves, though numerous, cannot provide enough material for wrapping Ukpaka itself. The allusion, therefore, is to what is numerically large but useless or unimportant.

6. It is generally acknowledged that Catholic lay men and women are more loyal and attached to their Church, especially the clergy, than the

laity of other established Christian Churches. See E. C. Amucheazi, Church and Politics in Eastern Nigeria 1945 - 1966 (Macmillan, 1986), Chapter 2; E. O. Enemuo, What are We Anglicans Doing? (Awka, 1950).

7. Following the visit of Pope John Paul II to Nigeria in 1982 and the celebration of the centenary of the founding of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria (1985), it is believed that the Catholic Church in Nigeria has come of age and should therefore brace herself towards a new and more dynamic era of evangelisation. See Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria:- Proceedings of the National Seminar on New Era of Evangelization (Sts. Peter and Paul Seminary, Ibadan) 1-3 May 1984.; also the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria, His Holiness, Pope John Paul II Ushers in a New Era of Evangelization in Nigeria, Joint Pastoral Letter, February, 1983.

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PRIMARY SOURCES (i)

1. Archbishop's House Records Onitsha:- containing private files and letters of Archbishop Charles Heerey and Archbishop (now Cardinal) Francis Arinze, stored in the Archbishop's House Onitsha.

2. Archdiocesan Secretariat Archives Onitsha:- containing parish letters, correspondence between the Catholic Church Authority and Government officials, town unions, the clergy, the religious as well as private individuals, especially in the period from 1930 to 1980.

3. Catholic Education House Onitsha Records:- containing documents relating to Catholic education and schools, correspondence between the Catholic Education Authority and other educational bodies in the period from 1935 to 1967.

4. Nigerian National Archives Enugu:- the following documents were examined - Intelligence Reports on the Onitsha Province, 1920 to 1945; Annual Reports Onitsha Province, 1921 to 1950; correspondence between the District Officers and the Residents, Onitsha Province, 1930 to 1948; Population Figures Onitsha Province, 1931 to 1950; Teachers, Onitsha Province, 1950 to 1956; Ndichie and Ozo titles Onitsha District, 1938 to 1945; Eastern House of Assembly Elections, 1953 to 1955; Judicial Court Appeals Onitsha Province, 1930 to 1945; Petitions and Appeals, 1925 to 1948; Warrant Chiefs and Native Courts' Matters, 1930 to 1938; the Missions and other Europeans' intervention in Native Courts, 1936 to 1940; Minutes of Onitsha Improvement Union and Youth Association 1938; Provincial Court Orders, 1930 to 1950.

5. Nigerian National Archives Ibadan:- access to the following newspapers - The Nigerian Spokesman, 1947 to 1949. The West African Pilot, 1940 to 1945; The Daily Comet, 1947.

6. Holy Ghost Fathers' Archives Dublin and Chevilly, France:- correspondence between Holy Ghost Fathers in Southeastern Nigeria and the Superiors in the period 1912 to 1950.

7. Journal of the Holy Ghost Fathers Onitsha from 1885 to 1912:- translation from the original diary made by Rev. Father Joseph Treich, C.S.Sp., in Port Harcourt.

PRIMARY SOURCES (ii)

1. Private papers of J. M. Nwosu - President of E.N.C.C.

2. Private papers of G. O. G. Ume-Ezeoke, pioneer member of K.S.M.

3. Private papers of Rev. Monsignor F. Ugwueze, Director of Catholic Lay Apostolate, Onitsha Archdiocese, and Chairman of Church Personnel Maintenance Committee.

4. Private papers of Rev. Father G. C. Ikeobi, Director of Catechetics, Onitsha Archdiocese, 1970 - 1986.

5. Minutes of Awka District Catholic Union 1947 - 1967.

INTERVIEWS

(Principal Persons Interviewed with Dates)

Names & Dates	Biographical Notes
P.E. Chukwurah 4 April 1983	ENCC activist; President, Archdiocesan Laity Council 1971-1981.
Chief P.N. Okeke 6 April 1985	Retired headmaster; former Minister of Agriculture in Eastern Region of Nigeria.
Chief A.U. Nwosu 2 October 1983	First son of Warrant Chief Nwosu-Mbike of Achina.
Rev. Msgr. V.J. Madike 28 May 1984	Son of Mr. D.I. Madike – Renowned catechist-teacher.
F. Onyeneke 30 May 1983	One-time Secretary of ADCU.
F. Ebunilo 19 May 1983	Retired School teacher and headmaster at Adazi and Achina; servant of S. Okaih.
Madam C. Onuorah 27 September 1983	First daughter of P.H. Okolo – veteran Catholic headmaster and pioneer student of St. Anthony's College, Igbariam.
I.I. Nwosu 27 October 1983	Father of the present writer; a pupil teacher in Adazi School, 1930 – 1933.
A.C. Dike 30 October 1984	Retired headmaster; one-time secretary of ENCC, Onitsha Branch.
Rev. Fr. G.C. Ikeobi 12 January 1987	Director of Catechetics, Onitsha Archdiocese; first organiser of Catechists.
A. Akogu 12 August 1983	A catechist, Ifite.

B. Nwabueze 3 September 1983	Catechist, Ogidi.
Madam C. Odenigbo 17 August 1983	House-wife; organiser of Marriage Training Centre, Umudioka.
Madam Mary Okafor 3 July 1985	House-wife; trained at Madam Odenigbo's Training House.
Madam F. Iwuorah 8 September 1987	Pioneer member of CMA, Onitsha.
Canon A.E. Mgbemene 5 September 1986	Administrative Secretary, Anglican Diocese on the Niger, Onitsha.
The Ven. Arch. S.O. Ugwuanyi 20 December 1984	St. Paul's Anglican Church, Nsukka and Anglican Youth Fellowship organiser.
The Ven. Arch. C.A. Mbonu 21 September 1984	First Nigerian Anglican Youth Fellowship organiser; Christ Church (Anglican) Onitsha.
Madam R. Tagbo 24 October 1983	First daughter of Mr. Joseph Modebe — a renowned pioneer catechist.
R. Onyeka 4 January 1987	Member, Inyi Catholic Church Committee since 1939.
E. Ezeamaechi 30 September 1983	Last secretary of ADCU; secretary of Awka Diocesan Laity Council.
L.N. Anwunah 5 July 1984	Second vice-chairman of ADCU at its foundation; retired headmaster.
Madam V. Anyafulu 4 November 1983	Wife of John Anyafulu — founder of Catholic Church in Amanuke.

C. Ezike 4 November 1983	Catechist, Catholic Church, Amanuke.
Rev. Msgr. F. Ugwueze 31 July 1984	First chaplain of ADCU; now Director of Lay Apostolate, Onitsha Archdiocese.
Chief M. Ojiako 19 December 1985	Son of Warrant Chief Ojiako Ezenne of Adazi.
V.N. Igboka 2 August 1986	Catechist at Nimo for over 36 years.
E. Ikewelugo 2 August 1986	Pupil at Catholic Technical School, Nimo; Carpenter.
E. Akukalia 29 June 1986	Pioneer Catholic of Catholic Church, Ukpo; fought for rights of Catholic citizens of Ukpo against Warrant Chief Michael Eze.
A. Onyiuke 4 May 1986	First son of Warrant Chief Michael Onyiuke of Nimo.
R. Isidienu 13 April 1983	Retired teacher; Pioneer pupil of Catholic School, Nteje.
Rev. Msgr. J. Nwaibegbunam. 17 July 1987	Catholic priest from Ukpo.
Rev. Msgr. A. Anyichie 8 September 1986	Catholic priest from Nnobi.
J. Udo 8 September 1986	Steward to Rev. Fr. Groetz — pioneer priest in Nnobi.
Chief Edmund Ezeokoli 22 February 1986	Son of Warrant Chief Solomon Ezeokoli I of Nnobi.
G.O.G. Ume-Ezeoke 22 October 1984	Pioneer member of KSM and ENCC.
Rev. Fr. A. Ojefua 21 September 1985	Founder of KSM.

Madam B. Ume-Ezeoke 20 December 1982	Pioneer member of Women's Wing of ENCC; one-time President of CWO.
J.M. Nwosu 4 August 1984	First President of ENCC; MHA.
V.A. Emenogha 1 December 1984	First President of CTA; MP.
Bishop M. Eneja 30 August 1984	Chaplain of ENCC 1961-1979.
A.N. Okono 4 April 1982	Administrative Secretary of ENCC; Editor of ENCC Bulletin.
Rev. Msgr. M. Maduka 9 April 1986	Keen supporter of inculturation and rights of African Christians.
G.A.O. Eze 8 August 1984	Pioneer Catholic Youth Leader; founder and organiser of CYC.
Madam F. Onyeka 4 January 1987	House_wife and 1st sister of Daniel Offor, first Catechist of Inyi.
S.O. Izualor 28 March 1986	Retired teacher; a pioneer Catechist at Ezi-Agulu Otu.
J.N. Edemanya 12 April 1985	Retired teacher, headmaster; started teaching in 1922.
S. Edochie 9 March 1986	Born in Nteje; a pupil in Adazi school 1930, renowned teacher, catechist and hunter, especially in Achina.
Madam Bertha Okafor 29 April 1985	First daughter of the renowned catechist, Mr. S. Okaih of Adazi.
A. Ojukwu 18 March 1984	Catechist at Nnewi since 1968.
G. Anunwulorah 7 December 1983	First catechist of Dunukofia Parish, opened in 1940.

Rev. Fr. B. Kelly 9 January 1982	Supervisor of Catholic School in Enugu Zone.
D.N. Adike 31 May 1983	Teacher in Adazi Catholic School in 1930s.
Bishop T. McGettrick 5 December 1984	Retired Catholic Bishop of Abakaliki; missionary in S.E. Nigeria since 1930.
M.I. Eke 25 August 1983	Retired teacher; catechist from Ozubulu; taught for 49 years.
Chief E.O. Ezekwe 31 December 1984	One-time secretary of ENCC retired teacher.
J. Nnebe 21 March 1983	Retired teacher; pupil in Adazi Boarding School in 1932-1936.
P.Eze 2 September 1983	Teacher-Catechist, Achina; pioneer member of ADCU.
Fred. Ibe~~ni~~ 30 August 1983	Native of Achina; pioneer member of ADCU.
G. Ndu 2 October 1983	Pioneer pupil in Catholic School, Achina.
Rev. Fr. M. Orakwudo 14 December 1983	A cousin and servant to Solomon Okaih of Adazi.

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